BUSINESS / B1

Donald Trump group in exploratory talks with BCDA

ACROSS / A13

GenSan cops find no basis for Pacquiao's claim of plot to kill him

NEWS / A2

GMA's nonwage benefits to labor vote-buying, say militants

ENTERTAINMENT / E1

Married action star brings preggy girlfriend to Beverly Hills mansion

Cell phones, cameras banned inside precincts

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECtions yesterday banned the use of phone and digital cameras by voters inside precincts during the May 14 elections in an effort to prevent the buying and selling of votes.

CELL PHONES/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, May 3, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 144 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Pampanga: Wide open season for 'jueteng'

ANGELES CITY—SIX MONTHS AGO, MANG RIC used to accept bets for an illegal numbers game by writing down wagers on the back of an official lottery form, a method commonly used to throw police off track.

But, since the campaign period for the May 14 presidential elections started in February, Mang Ric has been openly taking wagers and shouting

PAMPANGA/ A8

Cory to gov't: Where's Jonas?

CHR calls AFP officials on disappearance

By Jeannette I. Andrade and Jocelyn R. Uy

FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON Aquino yesterday expressed "deepest concern" over the abduction of Jonas Joseph Burgos, recalling that his father, the late newspaper publisher Joe Burgos, had "lit our paths in the dark, long years of martial rule."

"I appeal to the highest authorities of the land to send the clear signal to the field that Jonas Burgos must be surfaced immediately by whoever is holding him, and that no harm must come to him," she said in a statement five days after the young Burgos was allegedly kidnapped by security forces.

"If any organs of the state has a case whatsoever against him, we believe that Jonas must be allowed to defend himself in court, and not become part of the statistics of the disappeared and others who have fallen victim to extrajudicial punishment in these troubled times," said Aquino.

Also yesterday, Commission on Human Rights Chair Purificacion Quisumbing announced that upon request of the Burgos family she was summoning Armed Forces officials to shed light on Jonas' disappearance.

Expected in the dialogue conference today

CORY/ A6

IN SHOCK, a relative of the victim, mayoral candidate Roger Ilustrisimo in Santa Fe, Bantayan Island, Cebu, who was shot dead in front of the Comelec provincial office at the capitol compound in Cebu City on Wednesday.

JUNJIE MENDOZA/CEBU DAILY NEWS

Cebu town mayoral bet shot dead; 2 more killed

By Jhunnex Napallacan, Joey A. Gabieta and Jolene Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas
and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CEBU CITY—LESS THAN 48 HOURS after President Macapagal-Arroyo announced a crackdown on political violence, assassins struck again, gunning down a mayoral candidate in Cebu, an aspirant for councilor in Leyte, and a campaign leader in Quezon.

The latest attacks brought to 77 the number of people killed since the election period began in January, according to updated figures released by the Philippine National Police less than two weeks before the elections.

Mayoral aspirant Rogelio Ilustrisimo Sr. was shot dead by a lone gunman at about 10:30 a.m. yesterday after stepping out of the Commission on Elections office in Cebu City.

It was the first time in over 20 years that a candidate in Cebu had been killed at the height of the campaign.

The sounds of gunfire that felled Ilustrisimo and images of people running for their lives were recorded on a security camera but there was apparently no

CEBU/ A8

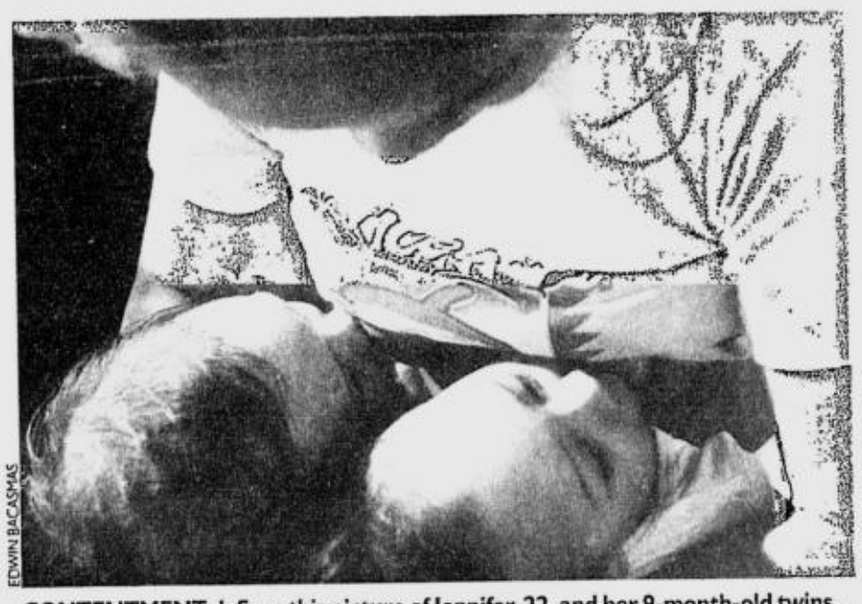
RP moms seek world record in breast-feeding

By Julie M. Aurelio *in Manila*; Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*, and Carla P. Gomez, *Inquirer Visayas*

THOUSANDS OF FILIPINO MOTHERS YESterday simultaneously breast-fed in day-care and community health centers, hospitals, even basketball courts, in a campaign to counter advertising claims that artificial baby foods are better than breast milk.

Children for Breastfeeding, officials of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Unicef spearheaded the "Sabay-Sabay Sumususo sa Nanay," an event that

RP MOMS/ A15



EDWIN BACASMAS

CONTENTMENT defines this picture of Jennifer, 22, and her 9-month-old twins. More than a thousand mothers breast-fed their infants to establish a new Guinness record and push for mother's milk as best for babies.

Sometimes not seeing is believing

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

HE NEVER HAD TO SEE TO BElieve.

Hoping to fulfill a childhood dream, British national Miles Hilton-Barber applied as a fighter pilot when he was just 18. He was rejected because of his poor eyesight.

On Monday, he completed a 21,600-kilometer flight on a microlight plane, flying as a pilot across 21 countries for 55 days—all that 28 years after he went completely blind.

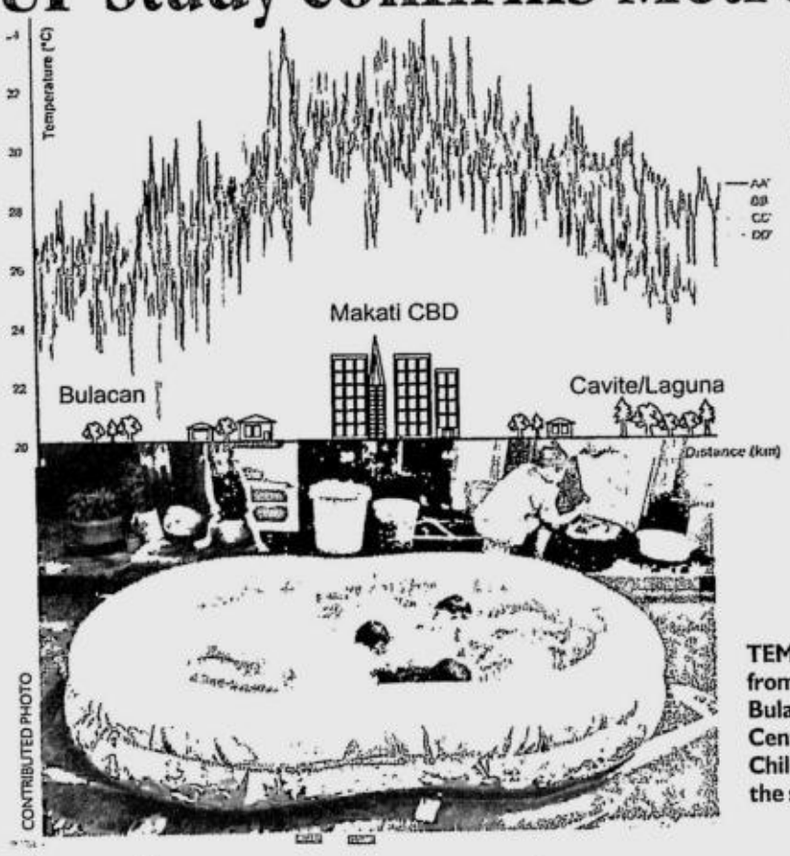
Barber's eyes look normal, moving with his every gesture as he speaks—but they cannot see. Hilton-Barber suffers from retinitis pigmentosa, a chronic hereditary

SOMETIMES/ A6

JESS YUSON

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: Blind pilot Miles Hilton-Barber (right) arrives here after flying across 21 countries for 55 days.

UP study confirms Metro getting hotter



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By Alfredo Mahar Francisco A. Lagmay
Contributor

THE HEAT IS ON!

Summer is here and the temperatures are rising. Once again Metro Manila residents will swear the swelter of tropical sun.

The intense heat during April and May can be quite unpleasant, and to hear complaints about the summer weather from Metro Manila residents is fairly common.

So who is really complaining? Foreigners and *balikbayans* of course and probably residents, who have lived in this city long enough to feel the difference between the urban climate of today and of decades past.

Indeed, the temperatures in Metro Manila have become hotter than ever before, according to a study conducted at the Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology, College of Sci-

UP STUDY/ A8

TEMPERATURE PROFILES (top, left) derived from satellite imagery along transects from Bulacan to Cavite passing through the Makati Central Business District, the city's hottest place. Children swim right there on the street to beat the sweltering heat.

Palace rebuffs Salonga: Esperon, checkpoints stay

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

DESPITE CRITICISMS, THE MILITARY will not be removed from the election scene, checkpoints will not be dismantled, and Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, the Armed Forces chief of staff, will stay at his post, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Neither will President Macapagal-Arroyo fill up the vacancy at the Commission on Elections because the midterm elections are just 12 days away, Ermita added at his weekly press briefing.

In effect, Ms Arroyo has rejected the concerns raised in a letter to her on Tuesday by former Senate President Jovito Salonga, who said her decision to call out the military to help stop election violence and killings would make the May 14 polls similar to the violence- and fraud-tainted elections during the Marcos regime.

"Napakalayo, walang kabase-basehan (It's too far-fetched, absolutely without basis)," Ermita said of the comparison. "The conduct [of the military] is very different then and now, so our people have nothing to fear because the AFP and the police are very conscious of how to play their role during this election period."

Ermita added: "We want to assure

PALACE/ A15

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17 15 | 3 1 1 2
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(All in exact order)
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Second FRONTPAGE

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Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/02/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Militant labor cries vote-buying

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Jerome Aning and Norman Bordadora

REACTIONS TO PRESIDENT Arroyo's package of non-wage benefits for labor yesterday drew the whole gamut of reactions: Moderate labor groups said they were happy, while militant labor denounced it as "equivalent to vote buying."

On the other hand, candidates from both the administration Team Unity and the Genuine Opposition (GO) were one is saying they would give legislative support to the labor package.

In her Labor Day speech, the President announced her plan to give tax breaks to minimum wage earners, put up a P25 billion housing fund, allot P50 million for the Department of Labor and Employment's livelihood program and P25 million more to establish sugar livelihood centers, as well as establish a pension plan for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

The moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, which hosted the President for her Labor Day address, said they were particularly happy about the tax breaks for minimum wage earners.

Allan Montano of the Federation of Free Workers took a wait-and-see stance. He expressed concern about when and how the President's promises would be enforced.

Political gambit

Elmer Labog, chair of the radical Kilusang Mayo Uno dismissed it as an empty "political gambit." He noted that the package was dependent on new legislation, and was therefore meant to pressure workers to vote for the administration's Team Unity candidates.

TU deputy spokesman Tonypet Albano denied the "vote buying" charge but reiterated that the President "needs a working Congress that will avoid gridlocks on important bills."

To this, opposition candidates were quick to say that a pro-administration Congress was not necessary to achieve the labor package.

Senate President Manuel Villar, a frontliner on the opposition slate, said the opposition is all for tax breaks and other pro-labor legislation.

In a statement, he said his own suggestion was a token P1 a year witholding tax for minimum wage earners.

"It is not necessary that Team Unity candidates win the elections for the bill to be passed by the Senate. I am fully backing this measure and have been pushing for its passage to increase the take-home pay of our minimum-wage earners and enable them to cope with the hard times," Villar said.

Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, another GO candidate, said that a bill exempting minimum wage earners from income tax had already been filed in the House of Representatives. The opposition in the House even co-authored the measure, he added.

"I don't know why it was not passed in this Congress, but was promised to be passed in the next one," Escudero said.

Bipartisan support

Team Unity senatorial bet Ralph Recto, who is also allied with Villar in the so-called "Wednesday Group" clique, called for a "bipartisan" drive to approve his own pending bill—which gives tax-free status to couples with a combined annual income of P288,000.

TU senatorial candidtate Tessie Aquino-Oreta suggested that a Labor Commission be formed to study labor trends.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, also running under TU, said another area that needed study was the reason for the "weakening of trade unions."

Meanwhile, despite getting an endorsement from President Macapagal-Arroyo herself, the TUCP did not endorse all the candidates on the administration's senatorial ticket.

TUCP spokesperson Alex Aguilar said the group would only be endorsing Team Unity candidates Michael Defensor, Prospero Pichay, Juan Miguel Zubiri, Cesar Montano and Edgardo Angara.

Of the Genuine Opposition candidates, TUCP selected two: Loren Legarda and Manuel Villar.

Ping says teammate junking him

FISSURES IN THE GENUINE OPPOSITION coalition emerged yesterday as opposition candidate Panfilo Lacson revealed that a GO senatorial candidate had tried to remove his name and those of three other GO candidates in a batch of sample ballots.

He said a Pangasinan town mayor had reported to him that the GO candidate, whom Lacson declined to name, had offered to print the sample ballots for the mayor. When the printed sample ballots came back, Lacson said his name and those of GO candidates Manuel Villar and Francis Escudero had disappeared.

The mayor, who gave the unnamed candidate a sample ballot that had a mix of GO and rival Team Unity candidates, was baffled by the changes and called Lacson.

"I am surprised that a fellow GO candidate did that to us. This is crazy. We are all one and then you will junk us?" said Lacson who spoke to reporters outside the Greenhills residence of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

"Some GO personalities are ill-mannered," Lacson said in Filipino.

Villar said he was alarmed by the report, but said he expects mudslinging from all sides as the campaign heats up.

Estrada said he would talk to the GO candidate concerned so the issue could be ironed out.

Adel Tamano, GO spokesperson, said the party stand is that there should be no junking. GO bets should support each other, he said.

But he said that the GO team managers cannot impose sanctions on candidates who do not toe the party line.

Referring to another junking allegation, Tamano yesterday denied ever saying GO would "investigate" Villar for allegedly junking his party mates in his sample ballots.

Tamano said his "statements were taken out of context by unscrupulous spin doctors."

He explained in a press statement that when he was first asked about the alleged junking by the Villar camp, "I said the story was not true and I even pointed out that such black propaganda against Villar was expected because he was a constant topnotcher in recent surveys."

Tamano clarified that when he said GO would look into the matter, he meant the headquarters would look into reports that certain local candidates were distributing sample ballots that would make it appear that there was "junking" among certain opposition candidates.

"Certainly, I did not say GO would ask Villar to explain and that we would investigate him. That is a blatant lie and the transcripts of my press briefing last Friday would bear me out," he said.

Kristine L. Alave

CAMPAIGN TRIOS

They campaign in threes, be they singing songs or just sipping refreshments, as senatorial candidates go into the homestretch of a three-month campaign. Bottom photo shows Kapatiran candidates Jess Paredes, Adrian Sison and Martin Bautista leading the singing in a candlelight rally at the Meditation Garden of the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City. In Calamba, Laguna, Team Unity candidates Tito Sotto, Ralph Recto and Tessie Aquino Oreta (top photo) take a respite from the scorching heat with fresh "buko" atop a truck during a motorcade.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN/TEAM UNITY PHOTO

Bayan Muna keeps party-list lead

THREE PARTY-LIST GROUPS WHICH THE military has tagged as communist fronts topped the nationwide Pulse Asia survey on party-list preferences conducted from April 21 to 25.

Bayan Muna, the topnotcher in Pulse Asia's April 3 to 5 survey, retained the top spot, having been chosen by 12.3 percent of those who said they would vote for a party-list group on May 14. But the figure is 1.4 percentage points lower than Bayan Muna's rating in the earlier survey.

Gabriela Women's Party got 6.9 percent and Anakpawis 6.8 percent.

Using the formula of assigning one seat for every two-percent share in the total votes cast in the party-list election, Pulse Asia said Bayan Muna, Gabriela and Anakpawis would each get three congressional seats if elections were held today.

But based on the so-called veterans formula upheld by the Supreme Court, Bayan Muna would get three seats, while Gabriela and Anakpawis would each get two. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

Public health missing from candidates' agenda

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Nathaniel Melican

PUBLIC HEALTH IS MISSING FROM the agenda of political candidates, a group of health workers charged yesterday.

"Most of these candidates do not even talk about programs to save the ailing health situation in the country," said Gene Nisperos, secretary general of the Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD).

He also lamented the fact that the millions of pesos reportedly spent on the candidates' television advertising alone could very well fund the year-long operations of a government hospital.

Nisperos said the candidates had a superficial understanding of the health situation in the country.

He noted that there were candidates who promised to fund the building of new hospitals using their pork barrel funds.

"What are we going to do with new hospitals when there are already no doctors left," said Nisperos, bringing up the ongoing exodus of medical professionals from the country.

In a statement, HEAD encouraged voters to consider a candidate's stand on health issues amid the "crisis" in the country's health situation.

According to the group, the six leading causes of death and disease "have not been addressed over the last six years."

Infant mortality rate remained high at 29 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to only 8 per 1,000 live births in nearby Malaysia.

There is only one doctor taking care of 10,000-26,000 residents in the country, a dismal picture compared to the ideal ratio set by the World Health Organization which is one doctor for every 600 residents.

Lacson may face coup raps, too, says Gonzalez

By Leila B. Salaverria

REELECTIONIST SEN. PANFILO Lacson may be facing not just an espionage case in the United States but also coup d'etat charges in the Philippines.

According to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, US government documents implicating Lacson in espionage activities in the US also pointed to his being the alleged mastermind of an attempted coup d'etat here.

Gonzalez said a memorandum from the New Jersey prosecutor's office showed that Lacson could be considered as a participant in the spying activities of Leandro Aragoncillo and Michael Ray Aquino, which were linked to an attempted power grab.

Aragoncillo, a Filipino-American who worked as a US Federal Bureau of Investigation agent, and Aquino, a former Philippine National Police officer and aide of Lacson and a fugitive from Philippine justice, were arrested in 2005 on charges of espionage.

Aragoncillo, a former US Marine who worked as military aide to two US vice presidents, pleaded guilty last year to four charges, including conspiracy to transmit national defense information which carries the death penalty. Under a plea bargain, Aragoncillo only faces 15 to 20 years in prison.

Aragoncillo, who prosecutors said was recruited by opposition forces in 2000, admitted passing information to Aquino and Filipino opposition politicians who wanted to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Aquino, 41, pleaded guilty in July 2006 to possessing secret US documents as part of a Philippine opposition plot to undermine the Arroyo administration. Prosecutors are seeking a 10-year prison term for Aquino who was spared a life term for pleading guilty. He is awaiting sentencing in July.

Gonzalez said the memorandum, which was part of US court documents relating to the sentencing of Aquino, was sent to him last week. He said it was part of a bunch of confidential documents from the US that he was still studying.

"There are factual findings in these documents which clearly indicate the participation of Senator Lacson... in the conspiracy, especially to stage a coup against the President. Therefore Mr. Lacson is not just guilty of espionage but also of coup d'etat, attempted coup d'etat," he told reporters yesterday.

He said he was checking if the documents would be enough to charge Lacson with attempted coup d'etat.

Reached for comment, Lacson said "[Gonzalez] should not preempt judicial proceedings in the United States since he is the justice secretary in the Philippines, it's improper for him to be interfering with judicial proceedings in another country."

On the coup d'etat allegations, Lacson said: "Why is he coming out with this just now? I thought he was not bothered by the graft case I filed against him. Why is he running berserk? If he had the goods, why didn't he file the case. I don't know what he's talking about."

Based on the memorandum that he received, Gonzalez has asked the US to indict Lacson for espionage. He said he was willing to help in Lacson's extradition.

"After a careful perusal of the memorandum sent to us, it is very clear that the principal in this [espionage] case is no other than Sen. Panfilo Lacson. We are wondering why he has not been charged while his co-conspirators, Michael Ray Aquino and Aragoncillo, who only acted on his behest, are now in jail," Gonzalez said in a letter he sent on April 27 to United States lawyer Christopher Christie.

He pointed out that the US had demanded the extradition of Mark Jimenez, who faced the lesser offense of mail fraud and illegal campaign contributions. *With TJ Burgonio*

BIRTHDAY MOM Mary Ejercito is asked to blow the candles on her birthday cake with former President Estrada and the rest of the family egging her on. JOAN BONDOC

POLITICAL FURLOUGH

Erap pushes his luck, to no avail

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DEFINITELY, THERE WON'T BE ANY LAST-minute political activity for deposed President Joseph Estrada in the final days of the election campaign period.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division yesterday turned down Estrada's request to allow him to personally participate in the May elections by spending the rest of the campaign period at his San Juan residence or let his VIP visitors, including the media, see him in his Tanay, Rizal resthouse.

In February, Estrada, through his counsel Rene Saguisag, asserted that his active participation in the campaign of the opposition slate—being an important political force in the country—would help pave the way for a "fair and credible elections" this year.

He also stressed earlier that allowing him to be accessed by his political leaders, followers and the media was one way of "leveling the playing field" in the May elections.

But the court found no merit in the motion, saying that the system cannot bend to accommodate his request and that the inherent powers of the court cannot substantiate the modification of his custodial arrangement or his transfer to his San Juan residence.

"To resolve this issue at this time would be laying a political policy which, however, is within the province of the legislature to work out. While there is nothing in our laws prohibit what [Estrada] seeks... no amount of judicial equity can justify the grant of his motion..." said the resolution signed by Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro and Associate Justices Francisco Villaruz Jr. and Diosdado Peralta.

The justices acknowledged Estrada as a "prominent political figure" who can "sway votes" for particular candidates but they maintained that he was still under detention.

"His detention in Tanay resthouse is by virtue of the fact that his liberty has been restricted in view of the instant cases against him... necessarily certain rights and privileges have to be suspended...," the seven-page resolution stated.

The antigraft court's decision came on the same day Estrada left his detention to visit his mother, Mary Ejercito, on her 102nd birthday and to have his medical check-up. He returned to Tanay also yesterday.

LP is dominant minority

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMelec) yesterday declared ruling administration party Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD) as the dominant majority party and the Liberal Party as the dominant minority party.

Each party will be entitled to a copy of the election return to help them monitor the canvassing of the results of the senatorial elections.

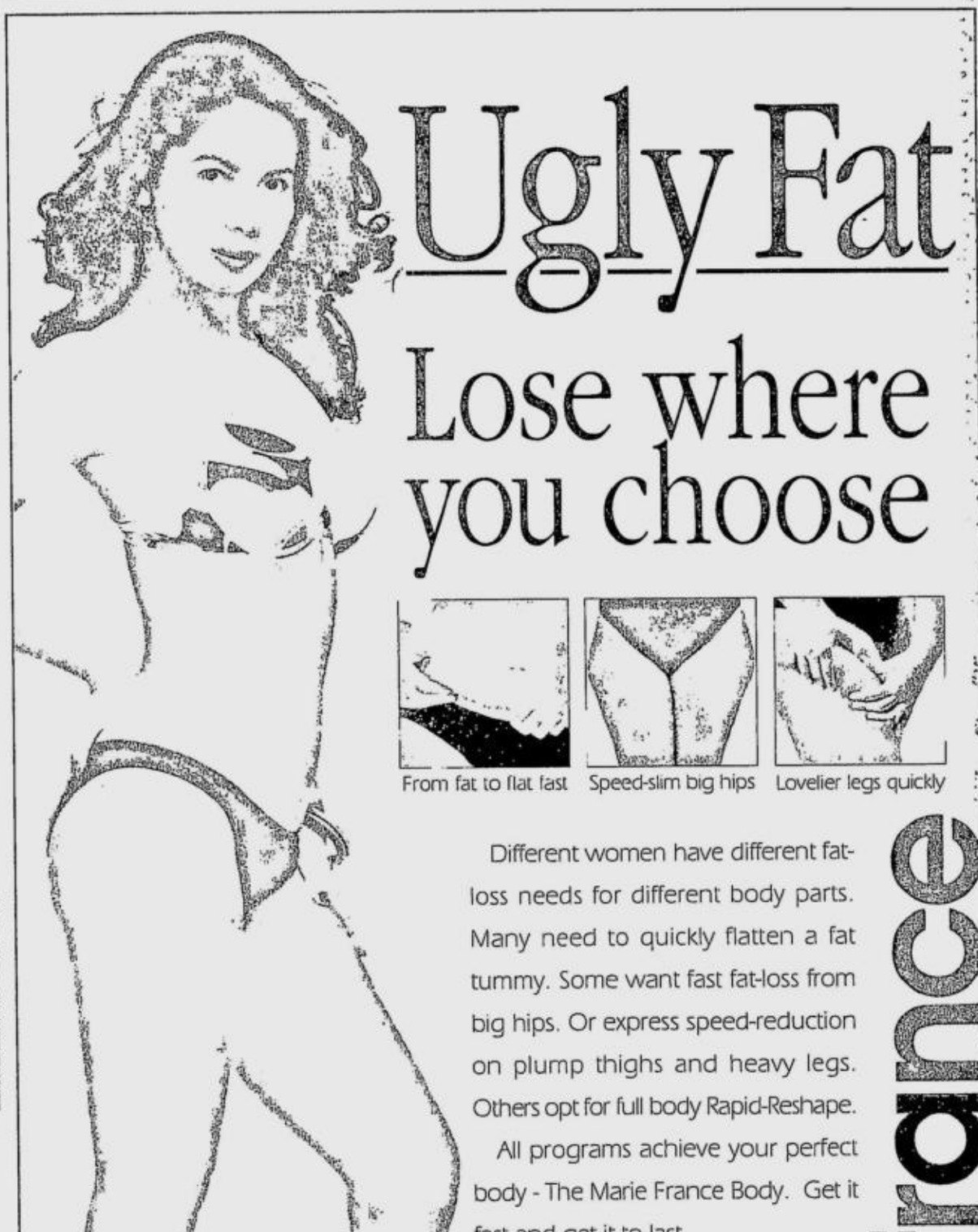
The en banc decision was reached late yesterday afternoon and finally laid to rest concerns that the election body might declare an administration-backed party as the dominant minority party.

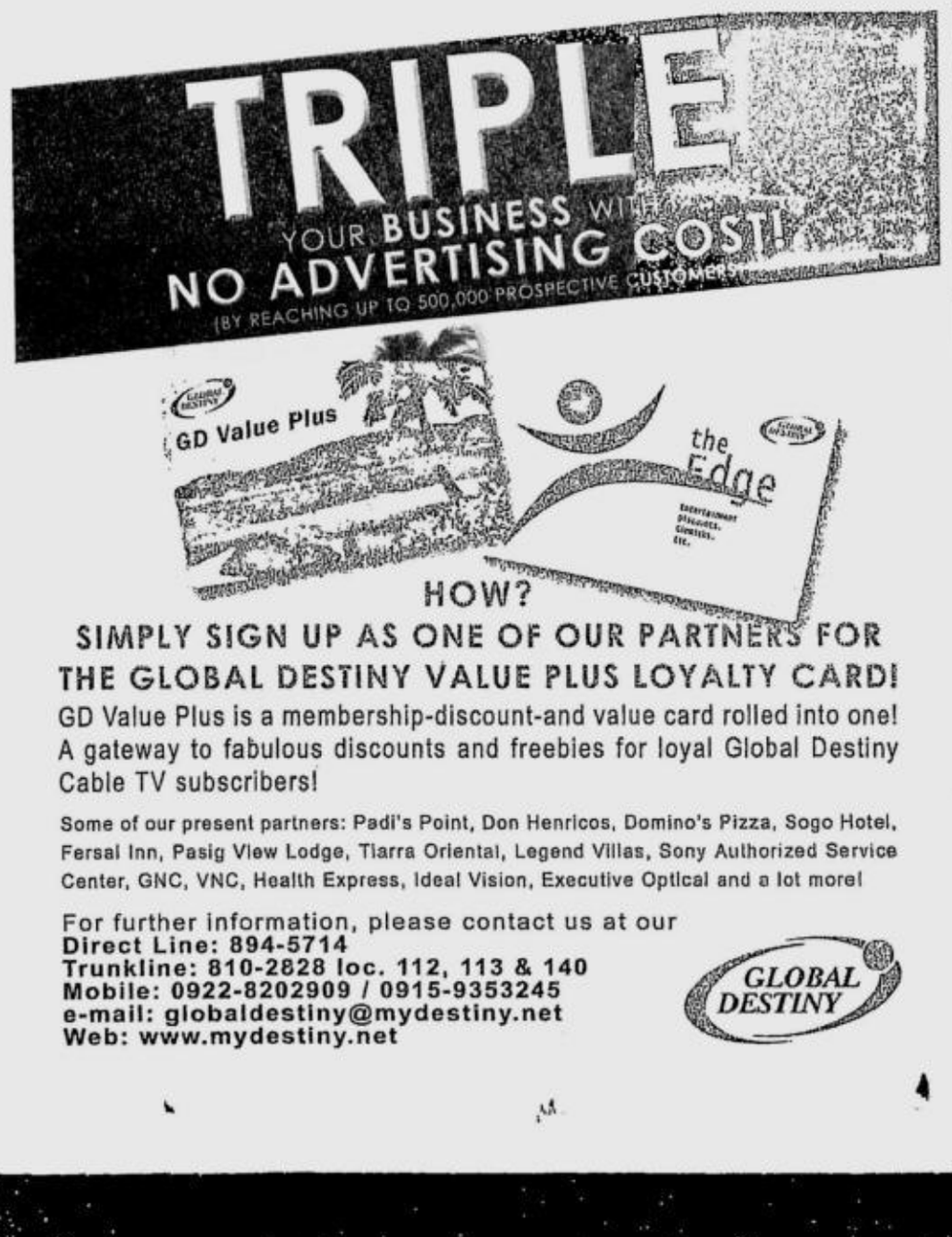
With the decision, Lakas will receive the fifth copy of the ERs, while the LP will receive the sixth copy.

"Lakas was declared as the dominant majority party and the Liberal Party is the dominant minority party," Comelec commissioner Rene Sarmiento told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Sarmiento said while the en banc decision was silent on which faction of the LP the Comelec was referring to, he believed that it meant the LP led by Sen. Franklin Drilon since it was the wing recognized by the Supreme Court.

Sarmiento said the Comelec took into consideration each party's track record and the number of candidates fielded in this year's mid-term elections in determining the dominant majority and dominant minority parties.





SAN CARLOS SLAY SUSPECTS

One down, 3 to go

SUSPECT ANGELITO Soriano being wheeled out of the hospital. RAY B. ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

POLICE ARE STILL HUNTING DOWN THREE MORE suspects, including a former helper of San Carlos City Mayor Julian Resuello, in the fatal shooting of the mayor last Saturday.

Philippine National Police spokesman Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said Cesar de Guzman alias Kabeza, had worked for Resuello as an errand boy during the time he was vice mayor of the city.

"He (De Guzman) was fired for some reason. That is why witnesses managed to identify him because they are familiar with De Guzman," Pagdilao told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday. He also said De Guzman was a petty criminal but police have yet to establish if he had any police record.

Pagdilao said a P500,000 reward has been put up by concerned citizens of San Carlos City for any information leading to the arrest of De Guzman.

Pagdilao also said two more suspects are unidentified as of press time.

He added that the identification of De Guzman and the arrest of one of the suspects, Angelito Soriano, were "big developments" in the case of Resuello. Charges were filed yesterday against Soriano, De Guzman and the two other suspects, identified only as John Does.

Police in Pangasinan arrested Soriano the other night at the Elguera Hospital in San Carlos City. Soriano was undergoing treatment for a gunshot wound to the leg.

Soriano sustained the injury when he tried to shoot it out with Resuello's police security after the mayor's shooting. In the shootout, SPO2 Jaime Almoite was wounded.

Almoite later positively identified Soriano after the suspect was brought to the policeman's bedside at the Virgen Milagrosa Hospital.

A paraffin test conducted on Soriano yielded positive results, Pagdilao said. *Alcuin Papa*

Saudi spares doomed Pinay from the gallows

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A FILIPINA DOMESTIC HELPER IN SAUDI Arabia who killed her employer in 1992 was spared from beheading, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced last night.

"Today is an especially happy day for one OFW and her family, for all OFWs, and for a relieved Filipino nation," Ms Arroyo said in a statement. "I just received word from Ambassador Tony Villamor of our embassy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that OFW Sarah Dematera had been released from prison in Saudi Arabia and is now under his care."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Saudi authorities turned over Dematera to Villamor 7:10 p.m., Manila time.

Ms Arroyo said Dematera, a 35-year-old from Antipolo City, Rizal, was sentenced to hang for the killing of her female employer, Loloa Saleh Al-Humaidi, on Nov. 15, 1992, only three days upon her arrival in Saudi Arabia. Her execution was held in abeyance until her employer's youngest daughter, two years old at the time of the killing, reached majority age this year.

Ms Arroyo said that when Dematera's case came to her attention in 2004, she ordered the Philippine embassy officials to negotiate with the victim's family for a settlement of her case.

"Today, Sarah's life has been spared, due to the beneficence of the Saudi Arabian government, particularly the governor of the Eastern Province, Prince Muhammad Bin Adulazizi Al Saud, who made possible the expeditious release of Sarah after the court had ordered the closure of her case," Ms Arroyo said.

"I wish to thank Mr. (Khaled Abdullah) Al-Ghanam, and his family for finding it in their hearts to forgive Sarah and accept *diyah* for their tremendous personal loss," Ms Arroyo said.

A brief on Dematera's case said Al-Ghanam forgave Dematera in exchange for 2 million Saudi rial "blood money."

The brief said Dematera killed her employer by "clubbing her with a piece of wood after the latter kept nagging her on her unsatisfactory work." The victim's husband found his wife's bloodied corpse in the storage room at the basement of their house.

Dematera was arrested on the same day and detained at the Dammam Central Jail. The victim's husband was also held as a suspect for three months.

Dematera was subsequently found guilty and sentenced to death by beheading but the sentence was suspended until this year.

Upon the President's instructions, the embassy engaged the services of Saleh Bin Abdulaziz Al-Wadani, a Shariah lawyer, to negotiate for the forgiveness of the victim's family.

It said the victim's husband held the key to the acceptance of the blood money. In December 2005, he agreed to accept the blood money.

On Aug. 14, 2006, he received an initial payment of 500,000 Saudi rial (P6.3 million) and signed the forgiveness (*thanazul*). And on April 25 this year, the court received the 1.5 million Saudi riyal (P19 million) and ordered the closure of the case on April 29.

On Labor Day, the Prince ordered Dematera's release.

The President thanked benefactors, whom she said wanted to remain anonymous, who contributed to the blood money.

"I also wish to extend our gratitude to the Shariah courts in the Kingdom for their show of mercy and to His Royal Highness King Abdullah for his continued assurances of good treatment of all Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia," Ms Arroyo said.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR 1 MILLION PEOPLE WHO WILL FIGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY.

These coming elections in May 2007 are especially important. Many of our current political problems, which have hindered fuller economic development and social justice, especially for the poor, can be traced to unresolved questions concerning the conduct of past elections. As a nation, we cannot afford yet another controversial exercise that further aggravates social distrust and hopelessness.

- Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines
January 28, 2007

We believe that what is at stake in the May 2007 elections is the credibility of our institutions and the viability of our hard-earned democracy. And we cannot let our frustration and distrust drive us away from the political arena. This will only embolden those who disregard the rule of law and undermine our institutions.

We can still reclaim our place in our country's democratic life, by ensuring that the May 2007 elections are honest and credible, and that candidates who have the people's interests at heart get a fair shot at winning.

VforCE, or 1 Million Volunteers for Clean Elections, is a nationwide movement of volunteer individuals and organizations, committed to providing voter education and volunteer training to protect the integrity of the elections, to fighting fraud and violence, and to working for long-term political and social reform. VforCE volunteers will work on the following fronts:

Voter Education and Involvement • Pollwatching • Operation Quick Count • Canvassing Watch

We need 1 million volunteers to cover about 300,000 precincts and 1,600 canvassing points in the country. Be a volunteer, join us with your friends and family, and help fight for our country.

We need clean elections. We need genuine democracy. We need you.

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Volcanic eruptions stall global warming

By TJ Burgonio

WOULD YOU BELIEVE that volcanic eruptions cool the atmosphere and, in a way, counter global warming?

"After the eruption of Pinatubo in June 1991, the global temperature decreased by 0.2 degrees Celsius in the troposphere," said Renato Solidum, Director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Philvolcs).

The troposphere is the lowest layer of the atmosphere extending up from the earth's surface. Above it is the stratosphere.

In a recent talk on climate change, Solidum explained that the sulfur dioxide spewed into the atmosphere during volcanic eruptions turns into aerosol, which in turn absorbs the sun's heat and radiates this back to space, warming the stratosphere but cooling the troposphere.

"It will cool the troposphere because the aerosols in the stratosphere reflect back the sun's radiation," he said during a PowerPoint presentation.

Mt. Pinatubo's explosion, the second most powerful eruption in the 20th century, shot nearly 20 million tons of sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere.

"Big eruptions introduce, in the short term, changes in the climate. Not global warming but instead global cooling," Solidum said.

"Maybe we want to have many volcanoes erupt," said Solidum, making light of recent worldwide alarm over global warming and the disastrous impact it could have on the Earth.

But Solidum was quick to add that volcanic eruptions have their negative side, too. It's not good for people living near volcanoes.

Pinatubo's eruption triggered high-speed avalanches of hot ash and gas, huge mud flows that displaced about 20,000 indigenous Aeta highlanders and some 200,000 people in the surrounding lowlands.

MOCK RESCUE. Navy chopper simulates a rescue off Sangley Point in Cavite. REM ZAMORA

Navy bares shopping list for modernization

By Christine O. Avendaño

SANGLEY POINT, CAVITE CITY—WITH BILlions of pesos for its modernization, the Navy intends to "refurbish" planes and helicopters and acquire rubber boats this year to be able to respond immediately to sea and other disasters striking the country.

Navy Vice Commander Rear Admiral Amable Tolentino said yesterday the Navy aims to be prepared for disasters and that for this year it was refurbishing two Islander planes and a helicopter as well as acquiring fast craft rubber boats.

Tolentino made the statement following an hour-long drill here at the naval base participated by 290 Navy personnel, including the Naval Air Group and Special Operations Group, which conducted rescue operations on a ship supposedly under distress when a fire hits its deck.

The Navy personnel used a Navy Landing Ship Tank, a helicopter, a patrol boat and a rubber boat to respond to the drill scenario.

"So we are also showing that your armed forces is not only involved in war fighting but also in developmental (purposes) and assistance to citizens," Tolentino told reporters.

Equally important in being prepared to respond to disasters was for the Navy to be able to get information "early enough," according to Tolentino.

He said there are more than a thousand Navy personnel who could be deployed to respond to a calamity.

The purchase of rubber boats and the repair of planes and helicopters was made possible by the P5-billion fund given last year by President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Navy as part of the P10-billion fund she gave to the Armed Forces of the Philippines for its modernization program.

He said while the P5-billion fund was more for the use of the Navy in the military's counterinsurgency campaign and internal security operations, they were "trying to jibe the purchase of equipment to be used for disaster response."

And in the meantime that the Navy was modernizing its equipment and vessels, Tolentino said it will have to "live with our limitations."

ATO eyes new angle in PAF chopper crash

MILITARY AND AIR TRANSPORT OFFICE investigators are pursuing different angles in determining the cause of this year's first fatal military aircraft accident which killed seven civilians and two soldiers.

While the Air Force is zeroing in on a kite string, the ATO said it was pursuing a different angle, which it would not reveal, in its investigation of the cause of the deadly crash of a Huey helicopter in Cebu last Saturday.

Air Force investigators said a thick nylon string from a kite may have disabled the Huey's rotor, causing it to plunge into a busy road in Lapu-Lapu City.

"The ATO is pursuing a different angle, if only to check all possible angles that may cause a crash," said ATO chief Nilo Jatico.

"And if our findings differ, that has to be discussed thoroughly. We're together in the investigation but our investigator has his own mind," he said.

But Jatico would not say what angle the ATO was pursuing as he said it might preempt the results of its investigation. He said it would take about 10 more days for the ATO to wrap up its probe.

"Yes, perhaps that [kite string] may have contributed [to the crash] but it might not be the only cause. We are sure the Air Force is doing an investigation that is factual," Jatico said, adding that its investigators have to check

Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino meanwhile said the Air Force safety board's initial findings blaming a kite for the crash stood out as the most plausible cause of the accident.

He said a check of the crashed chopper's engine showed that it was in sound condition during the flight, having used up less than half the engine's maximum utility of 2,400 hours. Every Huey undergoes an engine overhaul each time it completes a 2,400-hour flight cycle.

The chopper was one of six Hueys that the PAF acquired from the United States in 2003 and had only been in the air for a total of 7,215 hours, a relatively low total flight time for an aircraft in the Air Force fleet, said Tolentino.

"The inspection of the engine showed that, in essence, the engine was running normally during the flight. We also checked if there was fuel starvation, but we found that there was fuel in the line and the fuel control unit had no problem," Tolentino told reporters.

He said pilot error and weather disturbance have been ruled out as there was no evidence pointing to such factors as possible causes of the crash.

"There is no good pilot when an aircraft's rotor is already dead. The investigation showed that the rotor's RPM (revolutions per minute) decreased because of the thick string caught in the swash plate (a mechanism controlling the main rotor)," said Tolentino.

He explained that when the rotor's RPM drops, a chopper loses its lift.

As the PAF's 410th Maintenance Wing has already completed its examination of the crashed chopper's engine, Tolentino said he would soon lift his order grounding the Air Force's fleet of 41 choppers. But he said he reminded chopper pilots in air bases across the country to take special care in every flight.

He called on local government units to pass ordinances imposing penalties on those caught flying kites within a 4-kilometer radius from the center of airports and air bases, a longstanding ATO regulation that is being loosely enforced in flight areas. *Tarra Quismundo with Paolo Montecillo*

RP to get more Hueys from US

WASHINGTON WILL GIVE THE Philippines 11 second-hand army "Huey" helicopters next week to help fight communist and Muslim rebels, the Philippine Air Force chief said yesterday.

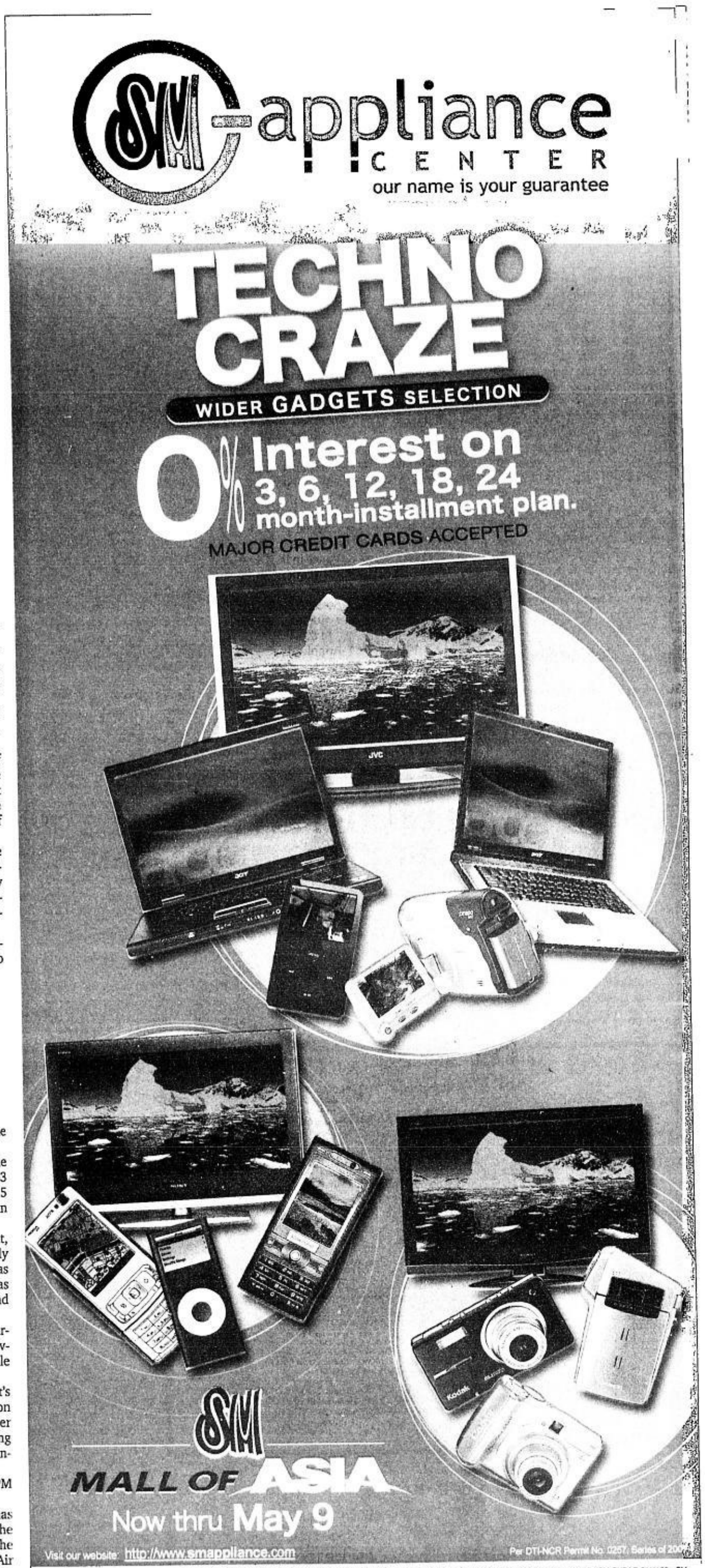
Lt. Gen. Horatio Tolentino said the 11 Vietnam War-era UH-1H helicopters were due to arrive from the United States on May 9 at a former US navy base in Subic.

"These aircraft were promised by US President Bush when he visited Manila in 2003," said Tolentino, who grounded all 41 operational UH-1H craft in the country last week after one crashed in Cebu on April 28, killing nine people and injuring two.

"Accidents could happen whether an aircraft is brand new or refurbished." Tolentino said air force experts had ruled out engine trouble as the cause of the crash, outside an airbase on Mactan Island, blaming nylon strings used in kite-flying.

The Philippines has 60 helicopters, mostly secondhand, donated by the United States as part of military assistance to fight Islamic militants.

Tolentino said the UH-1H helicopters were the workhorse of the Philippine military, used in delivering supplies and troops and evacuating sick and wounded soldiers in combat. *Reuters*



Cory to gov't: I appeal to highest authorities

From page A1

with the CHR en banc are chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP Brig. Gen. Delfin Bangit, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence Rear Adm. Leonardo Calderon Jr. and representatives of the Task Force Usig.

"The dialogue doesn't mean the CHR is blaming the military or confirming that they have something to do with the disappearance. We just want to find out if they are aware of the [incident]," CHR spokesperson Ed Diansuy told the INQUIRER.

A witness has told police he heard Burgos say "I am only an activist" before he was whisked away in a maroon van by four men and a woman from the Ever Gotesco Mall on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City on Saturday. One of the men reportedly identified himself as a police officer.

The witness is one of two who have given an account to police of the alleged abduction.

The family and associates of young Burgos have accused the military of kidnapping the agriculturist who had provided technical training to leftwing farmers' groups.

CORY AQUINO issues appeal to the highest authorities to produce the young Burgos immediately.

JAYJAY BURGOS: I'm only an activist.

SUSPECTS' SKETCHES based on descriptions of two witnesses.

Sketches of abductors

Based on the testimony of the two witnesses, the Quezon City police released an artist's sketches of the woman and one of the men who reportedly seized Jonas Burgos.

The woman was described as between 22 and 27 years old, at least 5'3" tall, slim, and had fair complexion and long hair. One of her male companions sported a crew cut, between 30 and 35 years old, 5'7" in height, was dark-skinned and medium-built.

The witnesses were a supervisor of the Hapag Kainan restaurant at the mall and a security guard, said Chief Insp. Lino Banaag of the city's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit.

Banaag said the security guard recounted that Burgos "casually went with the suspects." But along the way, Banaag said the guard reported he had overheard Jonas tell his companions: "I'm just an activist." Jonas reportedly spoke "in a soft tone" and that "everything looked normal," according to the guard, Banaag said.

Banaag said that when the security guard noticed something suspicious about the way the five people seemed to be "sandwiching" the young Burgos between them, he decided to ask one of the men about it.

Police officer

"The man introduced himself as a police officer and (told the guard) not to meddle in their operation. We just do not know how true that is because none of the suspects were in uniform and they never showed badges or identification cards," Banaag said.

The incident happened between 1 and 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Banaag said the witnesses reported that young Burgos did not cry for help nor did he resist his alleged abductors.

The witnesses said that before the alleged abduction, Burgos was eating alone at the Hapag Kainan restaurant, where he was casually approached by the four men, followed by the woman several minutes after.

"They talked for some 10 to 20 minutes. After that, they rose from their seats almost simultaneously and walked out of the restaurant with Jonas sandwiched between the suspects as if nothing was out of the ordinary," Banaag said. "Their actuation would give the impression that they were friends."

Banaag said that his department was doing everything to solve the case and to track down the missing Burgos. "We are not leaving any stone unturned. We are looking at all angles to explain the disappearance," Banaag said.

Forcibly dragged away

In a press statement, Jonas Burgos' mother Edith contradicted some parts of Banaag's story, saying witnesses saw her son cry for help to the restaurant employees and that he was "dragged forcibly" away.

One question also left hanging was the fate of the two other persons—a Melissa Reyes and a still unidentified man who were earlier reported to be with Burgos. Banaag said that Burgos was alone at the restaurant.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police, said there was still "no factual or legal basis" to say that the military was involved in the kidnapping.

But Pagdilao said investigators were not ruling out anything.

PNP Director General Oscar Calderon said militant groups implicating the military in the kidnapping should present evidence. "Otherwise, we should pity the (military) unit that has been accused." *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

Protest march for Jayjay on Friday

A MARCH protesting the forced abduction of Jonas Joseph Burgos, son of the late press freedom icon Joe Burgos will be held 3 p.m. on Friday beginning at the Robinsons Mall at the corner of Edsa and Pioneer in Mandaluyong and ending at the People Power Monument beside Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

The event is organized by the Amado V. Hernandez Resource Center.

A manifesto will be read at the People Power Monument protesting the increase in number of forced disappearances.

Sometimes not seeing is believing

From page A1

disease which damages the retina.

He is here in the country for a two-day visit, aiming to spread his message of hope.

"The only limits in your life are those that you accept yourself," he told the INQUIRER yesterday, two days after completing his historic flight, aimed at raising funds to fight blindness in developing countries.

Sighted copilot

Barber, a father of three, braved snowstorms, freezing temperatures and torrential downpours during his 54-day journey under the supervision of sighted co-pilot Richard Meredith-Hardy, 46.

The microlight aircraft he flew looks like a cross between a tricycle and a motorized hang-glider.

Wrapped around his leg during the London-to-Sydney flight was a small black switchboard which he clicked to check on things like altitude and direction. It was attached to a computer, equipped with a headphone.

It was not only a mission accomplished, a dream come true, but a great adventure, he said.

Everyone is disabled

"My copilot describes to me what is below. I cannot see, but I can smell. I can smell what crops are growing on the land. I can smell the factories, if they are making rubber or oil. I can smell the pollution," he also said.

His message does not only go to people who have lost their eyesight, or to those with disabilities.

"Everyone in the world is disabled. Many people are below their potential. Attitude is what determines altitude," he said.

Hilton-Barber is animated when he speaks. He has no qualms joking about his condition, saying he has long accepted his condition.

He still stands in front of a mirror when he is shaving.

Told during the interview that his hair had been neatly combed, he answered back: "Thanks. I am sure you are a good looking man yourself. You look like Brad Pitt."

Topless women

He no longer gets into arguments with his wife when they are in the beach or when topless women are all around. "My wife is very happy because I will never see her again. I will remember her as a young bride," he said laughing.

He knew he was going blind when he turned 21. His elder brother had already lost his eyesight and Hilton-Barber knew he was next.

"I lost my confidence. I lost my dignity. I lost my ability to read books, to write mails. I was feeling frustrated every time I bumped into something or I could not find something," he said.

He stopped working as a pharmaceutical representative when he completely lost his eyesight. He transferred to a government-funded institute for the blind, providing not only counseling, but also helping those who would be losing their eyesights like him to find another job.

Motivational speaker

Three years ago, he set up his own company offering corporate training. He works as a motivational speaker.

But he wants people to go beyond what he says, at what he has managed to do.

He looks up to his elder brother, who also went blind, as his role model. "It was his example, not his words, which changed me," he said.

In 1998, his elder brother, who went blind years before he did, navigated a yacht from South Africa to Australia by himself.

"I realized it was not my eyesight which was the problem, but it was my attitude," Hilton-Barber said.

He started joining marathons, enduring the intense heat of the Sahara Desert, the coldness of Siberia. He went up Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, in 2000 and also tried scuba diving in 2002. He has completed 40 skydiving jumps so far.

It was not only his disability which he wanted to conquer. Sitting on a narrow plane, flying thousands of meters high, he also fought and won against his claustrophobia and his fear of heights.

Pride—his biggest fear

His successful attempt to fly a microlight plane halfway around the world has landed him in numerous magazines and newspapers in many countries.

He seldom reads them: "My biggest fear is pride, to start to believe what the media is saying about me."

During his talk, he is always quick to speak about his weaknesses.

"I tell people if there is anything good you see in my life, that is by the grace of God. That is the goodness of God. Anything bad, that is me. I am responsible for the bad things," he said.

Dream big

He said everyone should dream big.

"The fences that we need to climb in life are the ones that we created," he said.

He has not stopped dreaming big.

Hilton-Barber sets his eyes on this next mission: Fly a fighter jet faster than the speed of sound.

Cell phones, cameras banned inside polling precincts

From page A1

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos told a press conference that the poll body had received information that photos of the ballot cast would be used as proof of compliance with the vote buyer.

"You can easily take a photo of your ballot as part of the vote buying. This voter may be equipped with a camera then show a photo once he steps out and say 'This is how I cast my vote'. And that would be the basis of the payment," Abalos said.

"Please, I am calling on those people who have their cameras that they will not be able to use these inside the precincts," he said.

Abalos said voters could bring their camera phones inside precincts but anyone caught taking a photo of his ballot would be investigated.

Aside from camera phones, Abalos said the Comelec had learned from Sen. Rodolfo Biazon that there was a proliferation of indelible ink that vote buyers could use to prevent supporters of a rival candidate from casting their ballots.

He said that once a person agreed to sell his vote, the buyer would put an indelible ink on his forefinger, effectively preventing him from casting his vote.

Creative schemes

Abalos described the illegal indelible ink as "the best guarantee of a person buying a vote to ensure that he was really able to prevent or buy that particular voter."

He said that while the Comelec's indelible ink is not available in the commercial market, it can be easily manufactured because its ingredients are published in the newspapers as part of the requirements for bidding.

Unauthorized people caught in possession of the indelible ink will also be investigated, said Abalos, who added that Filipinos never fail to impress him with their creativity. "They always come up with a new scheme every election year," he said.

Lionel Castillano, Comelec legal officer, also warned participants in a seminar for journalists on election coverage about the possibility of phone cameras being used to commit irregularities during the upcoming balloting. *With a report from Nestor P Burgos Jr, Inquirer Visayas*

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Pampanga Lending Center
City of San Fernando, Pampanga

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposals for the purchase on CASH BASIS of the properties listed below will be received at the Office of the Assistant Vice President, **Pampanga Lending Center, LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES**, 3rd Floor Freluz Bldg., Olongapo-Gapan Road, Dolores, City of San Fernando Pampanga not later than **May 14, 2007 (Monday). 10:00 AM** at which place, date and time said proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders.

DESCRIPTION/LOCATION	MINIMUM BID
A 19,887 square meter parcel of land (Lot 4-B-4, Psd 03-005172) located along NLEX Dau Service Road, about 60 meters from Dau Toll Gate, Dau, Mabalacat, Pampanga, registered in the name of Landbank per TCT No. 516803-R including improvements thereon (Showroom/Office Bldg., service center, resthouse etc.)	P39,705,949.00

Bid forms, Rules and Regulations may be obtained from the Office of the Assistant Vice President, Pampanga Lending Center, **LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES, 3rd Floor, Freluz Building, Olongapo-Gapan Road, Dolores City of San Fernando, Pampanga.** Prospective bidders are enjoined to inspect the above-cited properties before entering their bid.

The sale of the above-mentioned property/ies is at an **"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"** basis. The winning bidder/s shall take possession of the awarded property/ies without seeking assistance from the Bank. The award in favor of the winning bidder shall be subject to the approval of the LBP approving authorities.

LAND BANK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN AND TO ACCEPT THE BID MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES SHALL BE FINAL AND BINDING.

(Sgd.) CECILIA C. BORROMEO

(PDI - May 3, 4 & 5, 2007)

VICTORIAS
MILLING COMPANY, INC.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC., Victorias City, Negros Occidental wishes to invite interested bidders/contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the **conversion/retrofitting of existing G8-75 HP Automatic Centrifugal Basket Motor Drive** from 2 speed coil windings **to single speed motor winding** and from conventional relays controller **to OMRON PLC SCI-G or Allen Bradley PLC SLC-500 5/04** under a Turn Key Project.

Interested bidders must submit the following pre-qualification requirements:

- Letter of intent with interest to Bid
- VMC Accreditation papers for those who are not yet accredited
- Has a good track record and satisfactory performance as attested to by at least three (3) clients
- Latest audited Financial Statements stamped by BIR and certified by a Certified Public Accountant

Bidding kits are available at the MCD Office and at Makati Office on **May 3 to 10, 2007**, after payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00. Kindly submit the needed requirements on or before **May 15, 2007** to qualify to bid. The pre-bidding conference will be held on **May 18, 2007**, at the VMC ISD Training Center at **2:30 P.M.** The commercial bidding will be announced thereafter.

For further inquiries, please contact **Messrs. Carlos S. Quiatchon or Dan C. Labrador** at VMC Millsite at telephone numbers **(034) 399-3696 to 99** and (local) **2361 or 2309**, and **Mr. Ernesto "Toto" Oliga** at VMC Makati Office at telephone numbers **(02) 899-0485** and **(02) 890-7061**. Also visit our website www.victoriasmilling.com and e-mail us at mcd@victoriasmilling.com.

Victorias Milling Company, Inc., reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Company. The Company assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder/s for any expense/s or loss that they may incur in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **TERESITA V. ILAGAN**
Chairperson, Senior Bidding Committee

(PDI - May 3, 2007)

DepEd to help Palaro athletes in bus collision

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WILL shoulder the hospitalization expenses of 40-plus Palarong Pambansa athletes and school officials who sustained injuries in a bus accident on their way home to Cagayan on Tuesday.

Cagayan Gov. Edgar Lara, meanwhile, has promised to shoulder the funeral expenses of the fatalities.

At least four people, including two student athletes, were killed when their bus was hit by another bus along the national highway in Cordon, Isabela, a little past midnight Tuesday.

Critical condition

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus identified the fatalities as Shane Apolonio, 16, a sepak takraw athlete of Baggao High School; Maynard Anog, 12, football player of the Enrile North Central School; Manolo Maguigad, teacher and football trainer of the Amurung East Central School, and Leonardo Adriano, principal of the Nangalassawan Elementary School.

Reports reaching the DepEd headquarters in Pasig City said 12-year-old Wayne Mark Difuntorum, a football player of the Enrile North Central School, was in critical condition at the Cagayan Valley Sanitarium and Hospital in Tuguegarao City.

Lapus flew to the Cagayan capital shortly before noon yesterday to condole with the families of the fatalities and visit those who are undergoing treatment in two hospitals in Cauayan, Isabela.

Financial assistance

DepEd "will also extend financial assistance, in addition to the usual government entitlements, to the families of the deceased," Lapus said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

"Eleven officials and athletes are still confined at the Cagayan Valley Sanitarium while six others are confined at the De Vera hospital," said a DepEd report.

Nineteen other school officials and student-athletes, admitted earlier with minor injuries, "were already discharged and sent home," said the same report.

At least 33 of the injured were passengers of the Florida Liner while the rest were from the Victory Liner bus.

The Isabela police said one of the tires of the Tuguegarao-bound Florida Liner bus burst as it was negotiating a downhill curve. The bus swerved and was hit by an incoming Victory Liner bus.

Power cut plunges Bicol into darkness

By Bobby Labalan
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SORSOGON CITY—THE ENTIRE BICOL region and parts of Quezon province were plunged in total darkness last night after a major power line in Gumaca, Quezon, which had been damaged by Typhoon "Reming," bogged down, an official of Transco said.

Engineer Tony Licup, Transco head for the Bicol area, said the power line gave way around 4 p.m., initially affecting Sorsogon province.

But as power consumption peaked towards the evening, the brownout widened, Licup said.

Transco utilized power from the Tiwi geothermal plant to energize the two Camarines provinces and Albay but only 80 megawatts were supplied by the plant. The requirement was 130 megawatts, he said.

As a result, Transco resorted to power shaving to energize urban centers in Bicol.

As of press time, large parts of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur and Albay and the entire Sorsogon province still had no power.

Licup said it was still uncertain when power could be fully restored.

Palace says RP still has Asia's freest press

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESS FREEDOM MAY BE slipping in Asia, Latin America and the former Soviet Union, but the Philippines continues to enjoy the freest media in the Asian region, Malacañang said yesterday.

Addressing concerns expressed by the Washington-based Freedom House that press freedom is on retreat in critical parts of the world, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita belied the international perception that press freedom is being curtailed in the Philippines.

Not a Palace mouthpiece

He said the Philippine media would never become a Palace mouthpiece under the Arroyo administration.

Freedom House, in its annual press freedom study, cited oppressive governments and outright murder of journalists as some of the reasons for press freedom being on retreat, "a deeply troubling sign that democracy itself will come under further assault in critical parts of the world."

Conflict, coups

The Philippines, along with Thailand and Sri Lanka, was cited as showing a drop in press freedom because of conflict and coups.

Ermita blamed the negative perception about the Philippines on the "unexplained killings," particularly of journalists critical of the military or government officials.

Better example

"What better example than you—27 young members of the Malacañang Press Corps—grilling me every Wednesday here and shooting all the questions that you can ask and me answering the best [way] I can," he said.

If the Philippine press were not free, said Ermita, "I would just give you answers not necessarily to your satisfaction but to instill fear in you, but that [has] never happened."

'Complete freedom'

Ermita said everyone in the Philippines can freely express his or her thoughts in any media, proving that journalists are enjoying "complete freedom."

"We welcome all the questions you ask and we give the best answers we can just to give you an idea that there's no curtailment of press freedom at all in the Philippines. There's exercise of complete freedom by the media," he added.

Freedom House, which advocates spreading democracy, rates countries as "free, partly free or not free."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, May 3, 2007
Philip and James, Apostles

1st Reading: 1 Cor 15:1-8
Gospel: John 14:6-14

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. If you know me, you will know the Father also; indeed you know him and you have seen him."

Philip asked him, "Lord, show us the Father and that is enough." Jesus said to him, "What! I have been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever sees me sees the Father; how can you say: 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

"All that I say to you, I do not say of myself. The Father who dwells in me is doing his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; at least believe it on the evidence of these works that I do.

"Truly, I say to you, the one who believes in me will do the same works that I do; and he will even do greater than these, for I am going to the Father. Everything you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And everything you ask in calling upon my Name, I will do."

Commentary

The readings speak of these two men, first James who was one of the witnesses to the resurrection (though we do not have any written account of that, except in Acts) and Paul's writings. But the importance in each man's life (as in our own) is believing in the Word of the Scripture, the gospel passed onto us. We hand on what we receive: the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This is what we stake our lives and deaths on. In the gospel, Philip seeks to know the Father and yet he does not understand Jesus' words—if we see Jesus, the Word made flesh, then we see God the Father. The mystery of the Trinity—the dwelling as one of Father, Son and Spirit—and our initiation into the Trinity is what our life is. It is what sustains us and makes us holy, whether we are apostles, disciples, preachers/teachers/workers, husbands and wives, parents, students, single/widowed/divorced—we are all coming to the Father through Jesus' Word.

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Cebu town mayoral bet shot dead; 2 more killed

From page A1

recording of the actual shooting.

The victim in the Leyte attack, Buenaventura Recta, a former police officer running for a council seat, was standing outside the barangay hall in Kananga town when he was shot by one of three men on a motorcycle.

Police said they suspected Recta was killed by communist New People's Army rebels for refusing to pay the NPA's permit-to-campaign fees.

Ilustrisimo and Recta were both candidates of the Lakas-CMD party.

In the third incident, a former NPA rebel who later became a political leader of a mayoral candidate of Sariaya, Quezon, was shot and killed yesterday by hooded men while he was on board a motorcycle.

The killings occurred despite Ms Arroyo's order on Monday for the military to disband private armies and disarm unauthorized gun holders, and announcements by military officials that they were setting up more checkpoints nationwide as part of intensified security measures ahead of the May 14 elections.

JUNJIE MENDOZA/CDN

SCENE OF THE CRIME OPERATION investigator takes a closer look at the bullet hole on the car window of a teacher who was hit by a stay bullet when Sta. Fe mayoral candidate Ilustrisimo was gunned down.

Video footages

Ilustrisimo, a councilor of Sta. Fe town on Bantayan Island of Cebu, had just the left the Comelec office inside the provincial capitol compound, when a lone gunman shot him twice at the back of his head, police said.

Ilustrisimo was with his son, incumbent Sta. Fe Mayor Roger Ilustrisimo, when he was shot. The son was unhurt.

Footages from a security camera installed at an entrance to the capitol showed two suspicious-looking men casing the building and its surrounding area minutes before the shooting occurred, according to Byron Garcia, brother of Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia.

The area where the shooting occurred was not in the camera's range but the sounds of gunshots were recorded at 10:32 a.m., followed by a scene of people scampering away, presumably including the suspected gunman, Byron said.

Witnesses said the gunman was seen outside the Comelec office's main door minutes before the shooting happened.

Ilustrisimo was hit twice by the gunman who fired at him from a distance of about 3 to 5 meters, police said.

Ilustrisimo, previously a three-term mayor, was at the Comelec office to attend a hearing of a disqualification case filed against him by his opponent, Domingo Zaspa (One Cebu-Kampi).

Presence of armed men

Several candidates in the three towns of Bantayan earlier called on the Comelec to place the island under its control due to the presence of armed men in the area.

Zaspa filed a disqualification case against Ilustrisimo, accusing him of keeping armed men in Sta. Fe.

In Kananga, Leyte, the 59-year-old Recta was standing outside the barangay hall at 5:30 a.m. when he was shot, according to Senior Insp. Edmundo Gabriente, the town police chief.

Recta was killed allegedly because he refused to pay the permit-to-campaign (PTC) fee demanded by the NPA, Gabriente said.

"We also received an information that he was on the hit list of the NPA allegedly due to his strong resistance against them when he was still active as a police officer," he said.

NPA demands

Lt. Col. Lope Dagoy, commanding officer of the 19th Infantry Battalion, said the NPA was becoming aggressive in demanding payment of campaign fees. He said he had received telephone calls from a congressional candidate and two town mayors seeking assistance because they had received extortion letters from the NPA.

Dagoy said the congressional candidate was being asked to pay P250,000 while the town mayors were each asked P50,000.

Police identified the victim in the Sariaya killing as Vicente Jumawan, 37, a known former guerrilla under slain Quezon rebel leader Hector Mabilangan.

Police said Jumawan was riding on his motorcycle in Mamala II on the slopes of Mt. Banahaw when he was fired upon by a group of five hooded men.

The gunmen fled on foot.

Sariaya's mayoral candidate Boyet Masilang identified Jumawan as one of his chief political supporters.

Senior Supt. Hernando Zafra, Quezon police chief, said the killing was not politically motivated but was related to a shootout last Sunday inside the Sariaya cockpit, where five men were killed.

He said Jumawan was seen shooting it out with the gunmen in the cockpit.

"This is simply a case of vendetta," he added.

Death toll

The Philippine National Police earlier this week put the death toll in pre-election violence at 31.

PNP officials yesterday said the figure involved those killed in verified election-related incidents.

In their updated figures as of May 1, the PNP said it had listed a total of 43 incumbent politicians as well as candidates killed since the election period began in January.

The number of supporters and other civilians killed stood at 32, also as of May 1.

PNP officials said the provisional total of 75 deaths covered incidents that, so far, had not been validated to be related to the election, and that some of the killings might have occurred for personal or business reasons.

Comelec plans

The 75 deaths listed in the PNP tally did not include the killings of Recta in Cebu and of Jumawan in Quezon.

Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the poll body planned to augment troops in "practically all regions in the country," but only in select provinces in those regions.

"We don't want our (Comelec people) to be working in an atmosphere of fear. Also we want the people to be able to vote without intimidation," he told reporters.

The Comelec was finalizing the list of provinces where additional forces would be deployed. Among the areas mentioned were the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and parts of Regions 2, 3 and 4. *With a report from Nikko Dizon in Manila*

Pampanga: Wide open season for 'jueteng'

From page A1

results of the illegal lottery in his community in Pampanga.

"It's open season now," Mang Ric told Reuters. "People are no longer afraid that they could be arrested for betting. Our collections are growing two-fold. I guess it must be the elections."

Profits from the illegal game, called "jueteng," are immense and organizers are known to support poll candidates in the hope of ensuring protection if they are elected.

In Pampanga alone, as much as P80 million to 100 million is collected every week from jueteng operations.

Jueteng has grown into an estimated P40-billion industry nationwide, according to a study by a Church-based non-government organization in 2005. It has grown since then and a wide array of officials are paid off, analysts say.

Transactions in cash

"About a third of the monthly take from jueteng operations is earmarked for buying politicians' loyalties during elections," said a political operator. "All transactions are in cash and nothing passes through banks."

The money pays for campaign expenses, including posters, T-shirts and propaganda material.

"Jueteng subverts elections and undermines the country's democratic system," said Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a critic of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Jueteng money funds crooked politicians, paying for the so-called command votes in the provinces," Cruz said.

Alan Peter Cayetano, an opposition congressman running for a seat in the Senate, agreed, saying he was finding it difficult to fund his campaign.

Biggest campaign donors

"It's an open secret that the biggest campaign contributions come from immoral and illegal sources," Cayetano said, adding the administration's Team Unity senatorial slate had already spent about P3 billion in advertising alone compared with the opposition alliance's P300 million.

Half of the 24 seats in the Senate, all 240 slots in the House of Representatives and nearly 18,000 positions in local governments are up for grabs in the May 14 polls.

While political parties fund some of the campaign expenses, candidates are expected to shoulder most of the burden.

Under Philippine election laws, candidates seeking a seat in the Senate are allowed to spend P5 for every eligible voter or around P225 million for the 45 million voters.

"In reality, any serious candidate in this year's Senate race would need a minimum of P500 million to nearly P1 billion to win and land in the top six positions," said Earl Parreño, political analyst at the Institute for Political and Electoral Reforms.

Army of poll watchers

Besides advertising, travelling and campaign rallies, the major expenditure for Senate candidates goes to recruiting an army of poll watchers to make sure the votes are properly counted and tallied in more than 300,000 precincts nationwide.

Parreño said about P200 million to P250 million would be spent on an average of two poll watchers guarding votes for three to five days at P200 a day allowance, excluding food and transport.

And then there is the possibility of payoffs to win.

Votes for sale

"Candidates who were not prepared to lose are ready to spend more, literally buying their seats through a syndicate of corrupt retired and active election officials," said a veteran political worker, citing past elections.

"This early, we've heard that votes are already being sold at P20 per ballot at a minimum of 10,000-50,000 ballots.

In the past, about 600,000 to a million votes were up for sale," he said.

Corrupt poll officials accept money for switching ballots from one candidate to another, usually when they are tallied at the provincial level, where millions of votes are added up, the political worker said.

Rene Sarmiento, an election commissioner, told Reuters he had heard about the selling of votes at a wholesale price, but unless a complaint was filed, nothing could be done.

"We're reshuffling our field personnel to prevent fraud and other illegal activities," Sarmiento said. *Reuters*

UP study confirms Metro getting hotter

From page A1

ence, University of the Philippines.

Using satellite thermal images validated by air temperature records of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), scientists from UP have found that air temperature in Metro Manila has increased compared with the adjacent rural communities of Bulacan and Cavite (Figure 1).

Urban heat island

The recent microclimate study highlights the difference in the mean nighttime temperature of Metro Manila with Bulacan and Cavite, which is on average 2.96 degrees Celsius for the month of May.

This increase in temperature in thickly populated cities relative to the surrounding rural areas is called the Urban Heat Island or UHI.

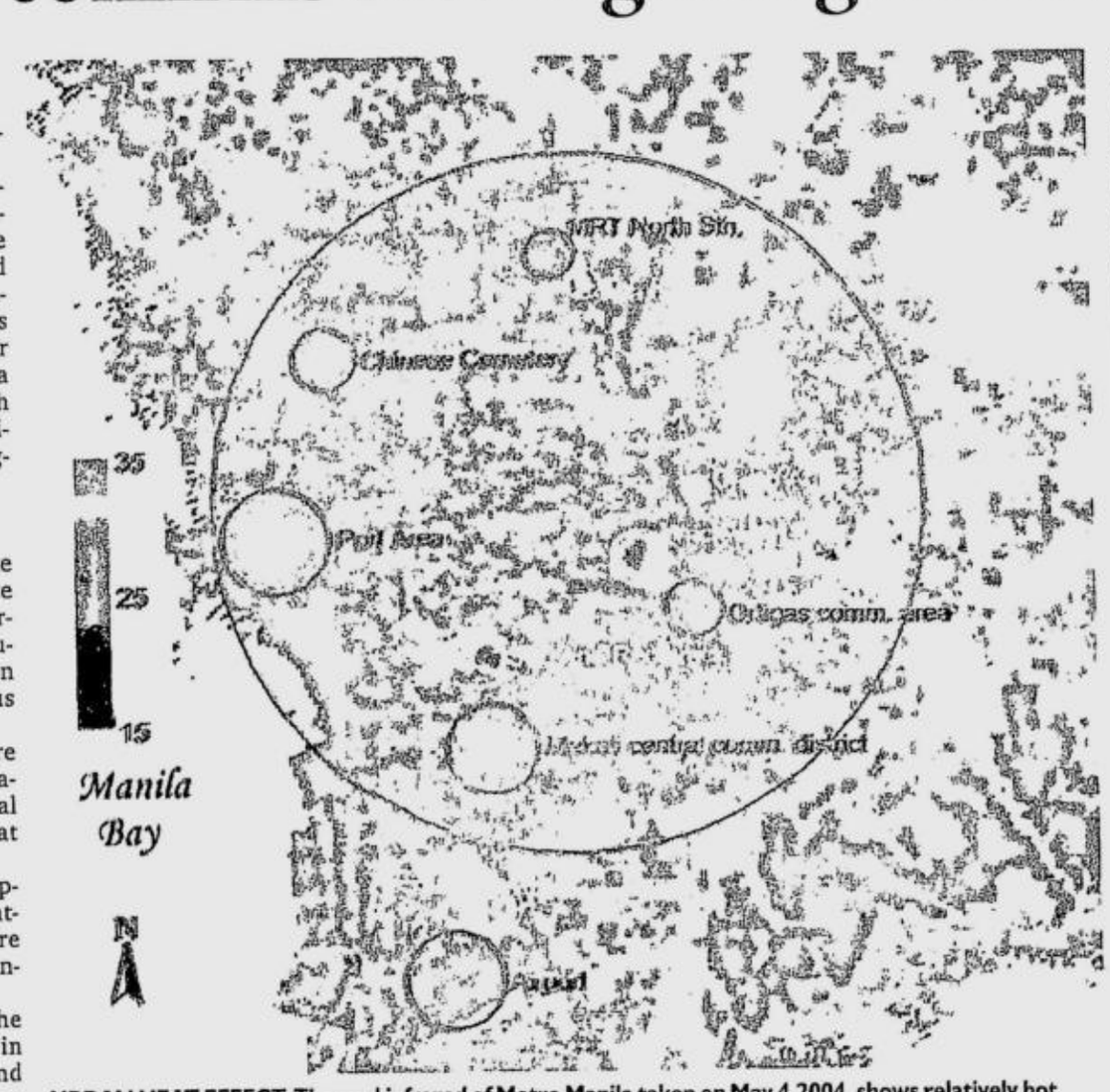
UHI is caused by development in urban areas where natural land and vegetation are replaced with asphalt, concrete, bricks and stones.

This process reduces the amount of vegetation, which in turn hampers evaporation and its consequent cooling effect on the Earth's surface.

Built-up areas also store significant amounts of heat from the sun, which when released from the ground starting at dusk, further warm summer nights.

Other man-induced factors, such as power generation, the use of motorized vehicles and air-conditioning units, also contribute to excess heat in the air.

The difference between urban and rural temperatures is proportional to the degree of urban growth in Metro Manila.



URBAN HEAT EFFECT: Thermal infrared of Metro Manila taken on May 4,2004, shows relatively hot regions depicted in red and cooler regions shown in green and blue. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hot and cool places

The hottest place in Metro Manila as seen from thermal-infrared satellite images is the Makati Central Business District (CBD).

Other similarly hot places are the Ortigas commercial area, Ninoy Aquino Internationl Airport (Naia), MRT North, the Port area and the Chinese Cemetery (Figure 2).

LAGMAY

Not all places though within Metro Manila are hot. Some are rather cool. Wack-Wack golf course, Camp Aguinaldo, Manila Seedling Bank, Sta. Ana racetrack, Villamor golf course and the University of the Philippines campus are some examples.

These areas are characterized by wide open spaces and vegetation.

Action plans

The UP study of Metro Manila's microclimate underscores the need to address problems besetting urban development in the country's capital.

It is thus imperative that long-term development plans consider the negative impact caused by the UHI effect. On top of air and noise pollution, air temperature quality is a concern that needs serious attention.

Government planners, architects and developers have a major role to play in this urban bdilemma. Building design codes need to be revised. New guidelines on building spacing, orientation and design aimed at maximizing air flow and reflection of solar radiation must be set.

Because plants can lower the temperature in cities, strategies to increase the amount of vegetation should be carefully studied by local governments.

Tree planting, roof gardens

The study recommends incentive programs to encourage tree planting. One definite action that citizens can do is to make roof gardens and plant in their backyards to increase the amount of vegetation within the city.

Metro Manila is a heat-sink and has become a very uncomfortable place. The continued urbanization and growing population of Metro Manila will further lead to the deterioration of the microclimate unless concrete actions are taken.

The best solution, perhaps, is for government to start decongesting the city by moving major institutions and key facilities away from the nation's capital. This should in the long-term give its residents some respite from scorching summers.

Note: The recent microclimate study of Metro Manila is the Master of Science thesis by Mary Rose. M. Tiangco. Dr. AM.F. Lagmay and Dr. Josefina Argete are her thesis adviser and reader, respectively. A copy of her M.Sc. thesis is available at the College of Science, University of the Philippines Library.

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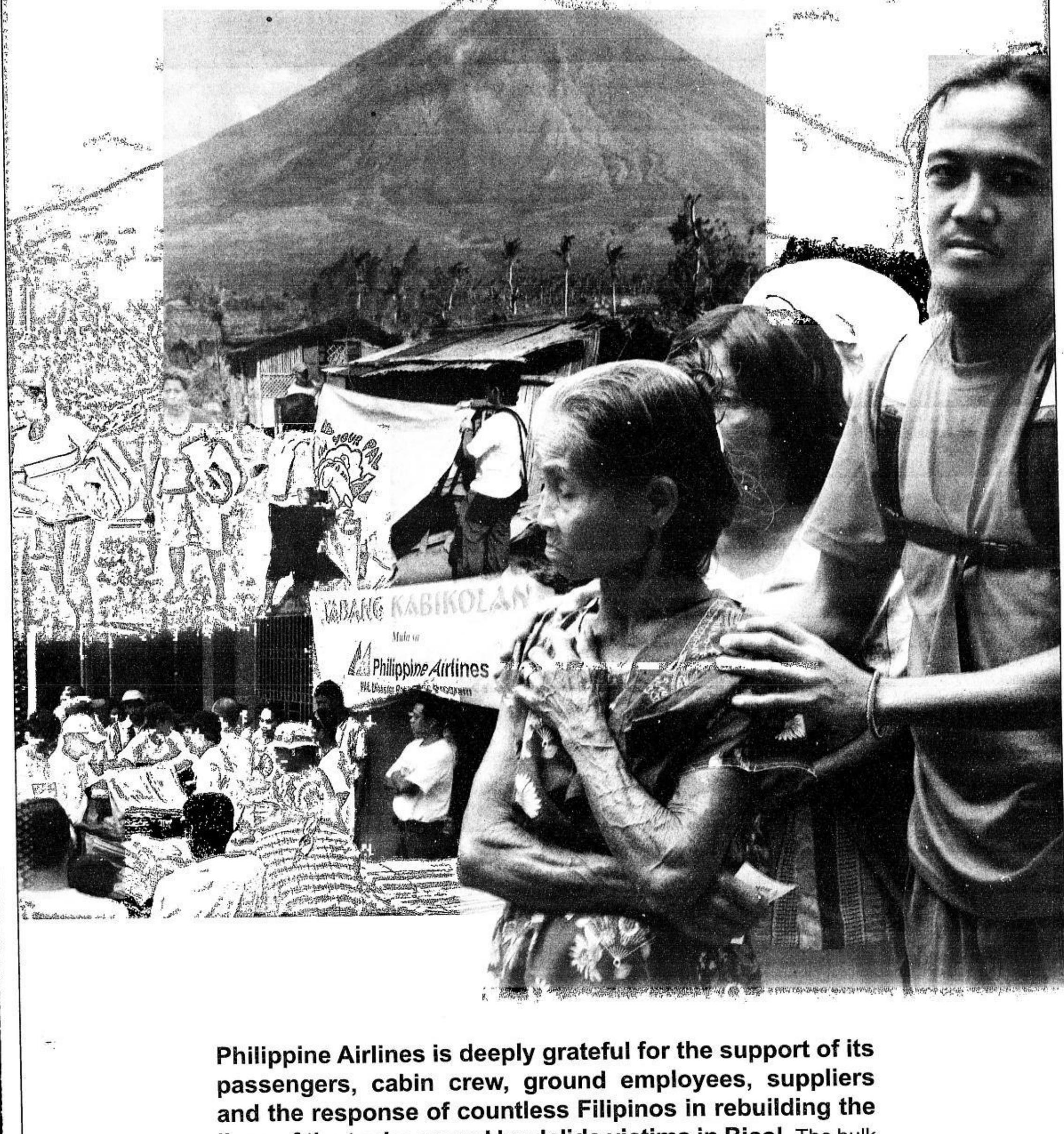

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Killing season

THE DAY AFTER POLICE BODYGUARDS AND GOONS from rival political camps shot it out in Jaen, Nueva Ecija, on April 27, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon rushed to assure everyone that the election on May 14 would be a peaceful one. "This is not going to be a violent election," he said.

A fearless forecast or a foolish one? "There is a big drop in the figures," Calderon pointed out, referring to the number of violent incidents recorded so far in the campaign. As he spoke, the PNP had toted up 80 cases of election-related violence. In the entire election period in 2004, more than 200 such cases were reported.

EDITORIAL

However, no one could have missed the irony of Calderon mouthing soothing reassurances about peaceful polls right after the bloodiest encounter in this election season. The Jaen incident was not just an ordinary gunfight, but a real war fought in front of hundreds of people. When the smoke cleared, two men lay dead, 12 were wounded, and eight vehicles were left peppered with bullets. The war was fought by security forces belonging to Nueva Ecija Rep. Rodolfo Antonino of Kampi and dismissed Liberal Party Mayor Antonio Esquivel.

But even if the number of cases and the number of casualties don't reach the same levels as in previous elections, there is one difference that should worry both the police and the politicians. This time around, it is not just the foot soldiers that are in the line of fire, the killers are raising their sights and targeting the candidates themselves.

• On March 30, Vicente D. Rabaya, a Nationalist People's Coalition candidate for congressman, was found dead inside a rented SUV in White Plains, Quezon City. He was executed gangland-style and took two bullets to his head and abdomen. His father said politics was behind the murder.

• On April 7, Vice Gov. Rommel Diasen of Kalinga, who was seeking the governorship as the official candidate of the Lakas-CMD, was shot dead by a lone gunman as he was delivering a speech in Tabuk. His supporters claimed the killing was carried out by an assassin hired by one of his rivals.

• Last Saturday in San Carlos City, Pangasinan, Mayor Julian Resuello was shot by hired goons as he was pumping flesh in the middle of the city fiesta celebration. Resuello died two days later at St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City. One of his bodyguards, who had tried to protect the mayor with his own body, died hours after the shooting.

• Yesterday Roger Illustrisimo, Lakas-CMD candidate for mayor of Sta. Fe, Cebu, was shot dead right in front of the provincial office of the Commission on Elections in Cebu City.

• In what would become a prelude to the killing season, Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin and his police bodyguard were shot and killed as they were coming out of Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City where he had stood as sponsor at the wedding of his niece.

There is one other detail that makes these political killings even more chilling: all but one (the Rabaya murder) were carried out in front of witnesses. Bersamin was killed in a churchyard that is usually busy and located right in the heart of the city. Diasen was assassinated in the middle of a campaign speech and in front of dozens of supporters. Resuello was killed inside the San Carlos City gymnasium in front of possibly a few thousand people who had gathered for the coronation of the local beauty queen. And the gun battle in Jaen erupted right where Antonino was holding a campaign rally attended by hundreds of his supporters.

It is as if these goons and assassins were confident that they either would not be caught or that if caught, they would escape punishment one way or the other because of their powerful connections. The culture of impunity that has claimed the lives of hundreds of journalists and leftist activists is fast catching up with some powers-that-be as well as some political wannabes.

What all these killings show is the failure of law enforcement agencies to protect lives and enforce the law. For one thing, a gun ban has been in effect from the start of the election period, and yet hired killers have been able to slip through the police and carry out their mission in public. For another, no one has been caught much less charged for these well-publicized murders.

Obviously, Calderon needs to do more than just throw statistics at people who fear for their safety.

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Morning after

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ON THE MORNING AFTER THE MAY 14 elections, what will we hear?

"We wuz cheated!" trashed candidates will yelp. In this country, everyone wins elections. But some "winners" will insist they were gypped. Eddie Villanueva of the Jesus Is Lord movement, for example, never learned this lesson.

Ignore today's Mexico. In Japan, Canada or EU countries like Britain, losers concede, usually within 24 hours after the voting ends. On the basis of exit polls, Jimmy Carter threw in the towel from the White House on the East Coast, even before West Coast booths closed.

Here, the gracious concession vanished with the generations of Sergio Osmeña Sr., Elipidio Quirino and Claro Recto. Bitter protracted election protests, even murder and mayhem, replaced it. Post-May 14 recriminations will further poison an already toxic atmosphere that has already crippled governance.

One reason for this is our primitive manual count. It's a standing invitation for fraud. And the shoddy performance of the Commission on Elections saps the credibility of our electoral process further. As Nicaraguan dictator Anastacio Somoza explained his June 1997 "landslide" win: "You won the elections; but I won the count."

Yet, this surliness is at variance with the decency found in most Filipinos. As the campaign swings into the homestretch, Ang Kapatiran candidates Martin Bautista, Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison show that trait. Swamped by machine politics, Bautista admits their efforts to present reform programs have not made a dent so far. That's a concession in mufti.

"There are times, in politics, when you must be on the right side and lose," Harvard economist John Kenneth Gailbraith once said. Kapatiran's insistence on principle against odds will see Filipinos, like this one, vote for the trio, despite the prospect of defeat.

Pathetically unqualified candidates, meanwhile, parade before us, on TV screens, newspaper ads, while flashing their "pearlies" from every available wall. They and their staff are on overdrive. But will these characters, if elected, make a difference in our lives?

Gringo Honasan set a world record when he flubbed every coup he staged, noted Yale University's study: "Closer Than Brothers." It's been 36 years since taxpayers' funds educated him at the Philippine Military Academy. Today, he swears by constitutional processes. Finally? Or is he just a slow learner?

Impeaching the President, once again, does not constitute policy. But that single plank sums up the opposition's "alternative program of government." The opposition's detained chairman emeritus Joseph Estrada has nothing to contribute to the economic and social dialogue. He never had. All he wants is another 24-hour pass from the Sandiganbayan for yet another outing. *Mababaw ang kaligayahan.*

Money woes, meanwhile, cripple the opposition campaign. Only four of 12 senatorial candidates toted up the agreed P5 million each for the pooled campaign fund, opposition sources admit. "Deadbeats" badger flustered candidate Loren Legarda: "Foot the bill since you're leading anyway." And Erap shut off the finance spigot once his mayor-son JV Ejercito quit the senatorial race. Remember the Fernando Poe campaign? It wobbled down this alley before.

The administration, meanwhile, is handicapped by its midgets. Lack of moral bona fides drag back Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson's campaign. Candidate Prospero Pichay burned P109 million for TV ads. Yet, few agree with his ads that the Senate is a vegetable garden.

Neither have TV soap cosmetics papered over comedian Tito Sotto's patchy legislative record. "Stardust" no longer translates automatically into votes. Like Sotto, senatorial candidates Richard Gomez and Cesar Montano are trailing. The withering of rallies, as main fora for election bids, is placing a premium on brain rather than glitz. Boxer Manny Pacquiao is discovering this belatedly in General Santos.

"Coups-for-Rent," peddled by Magdalo rebels in the Oakwood mutiny, marked the earlier election season. But "the defining character of the 2007 mid-term elections ... is the phenomenal proliferation of political dynasties," notes columnist Antonio Abaya. This is "neo-feudalism" where political power no longer emanates from land but "control of public offices ... easily become windows for rent-seeking and the fastest route to fabulous wealth."

"The most shameless example of dynasty-building ... is in Taguig," he adds. Alan Peter Cayetano (is) running for senator while sister Pia Cayetano-Sebastian is still in the Senate. His wife Laarni is running for Congress. Brother Renen, outgoing councilor, is running for vice mayor of Muntinlupa City.

The Cayetanos are only one of the family mafias engaged in "political incest," noted this "Viewpoint" column. (INQUIRER, 4/12/07) This 21st-century clone of feudal rule has spread nationwide. But few seem aware how deep the infection runs: from the presidential family down to tin-pot mayors in shell cities. So, "Kamag-anak Incorporated" style of governance will persist after May 14.

Politics here often consists of "choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable." Now, family dynasties will carve that rule into stone tablets—unless stopped. This is not easy. Greed is impervious to reason.

So, will these dynasties, on May 14, shove us further into a box that few Filipinos want: people protest? "Would it not be easier for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?" as Hungarians used to crack about their Soviet *caciques*.

* * *

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Love, hate

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

APPARENTLY, THE GENUINE OPPOSITION has found its "attack mode" vindicated by a new survey showing GMA's continuing unpopularity. Specifically, GO has been emboldened in its ads attacking corruption and poverty by an SWS survey showing that the majority of Filipinos believe that GMA lies every time she tells them about her Enchanted Kingdom. Indeed, that says the only way GMA can get her ticket, Team Unity, to win is by cheating.

I don't know how much GO spent for this survey. I know it could have gotten what it says for free. Does any one of these findings come as a surprise? Is it such an astounding discovery that most Filipinos distrust GMA and believe she will cheat in these elections?

Ben Evardone, the campaign manager of Team Unity, says the SWS has sold out to the opposition. That's what they said too when the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC), an organization based in Hong Kong, classified this country as now the most corrupt in Asia. They said PERC had sold out to the opposition. They didn't say how.

This particular survey, says Evardone, must have been thoroughly biased to have come up with the numbers that it did—40 percent of 2,500 respondents saying GMA would cheat in the counting against 20 percent who said no; and 46 percent saying GMA lies when she talks to the public against 18 percent who said no. He should be thankful for the 20 percent and 18 percent. That means this country still has enough people you can sell snake oil, the Brooklyn Bridge and GMA's virtues to. Otherwise, the combined credibility of GMA, the two Gonzalezes, Hermogenes Esperon and most of the Team Unity candidates would be less than the IQ of a cretin. My apologies to cretins.

These things were patent from the start. Along with most Filipinos believing GMA did not win in 2004 and was ruling without a mandate. The only question was what the opposition would do with it. I've always said the issue in this election was GMA, and the opposition had the singular opportunity to turn it into a referendum on her. It did not. The problem is not that the opposition is in attack mode, it is that it has not been in attack mode enough.

Look what the Democrats in the United States have been doing. They've been harping on only one issue and that is the Iraq War. That was how they crushed the Republicans in the polls last year. This early, that's what the Democratic presidential hopefuls, among them Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, have been doing, harping on that very same issue. They'll get the same result next year, given that most Americans too believe Bush lies through his teeth, which was how he dragged them into Iraq.

You've got an enviable advantage and you won't exploit it? You've got to be kidding—or you've got to be the Philippine opposition.

The crime is doubly the worse for one almost unbelievable advantage that the opposition has in these elections which it has not exploited. That is Garci running for congressman in Bukidnon. Frankly, I didn't think he would be allowed to. It was tempting the fates, or rubbing salt on wounds. He is the living, breathing and slithering reminder that we have a fake government, the corporeal embodiment of the political and moral decay of this country. The opposition is so wrapped up with finding "scientific" support for a campaign strategy it can't see the power of symbol, image, or myth, which are the things that move the Filipino heart and mind. All it had to do was turn Garci into the symbol of what Team Unity represented. It hasn't. Except for Ping Lacson who has noted the supreme irony of calling Garci "Honorable" if he should land in Congress, the opposition has chosen to ignore him.

Evardone and company, of course, call the opposition's potshots at corruption and poverty "hate politics." And it is probably fear of that label that has dissuaded it from stepping up its attacks. But easy enough to parry that thrust and turn it right back at the thruster. The opposition can always say: "But of course we represent 'the politics of hate.' We hate lying to the people, particularly on the grave of Jose Rizal. We hate cheating the voters, particularly by helloing one Garci and insisting that he count other people's votes as ours. We hate stealing the people's money, God knows that's grabbing food from the mouths of hungry children."

The opposition can always say: "But of course Team Unity represents the politics of love, or indeed unity. They love power and are united in getting it by hook or by crook, by God and by Garci. They love money, and are united in bankrupting the national treasury, such as by running an exorbitant campaign paid for by the taxpayer. They love tyranny and are united in propping up a fake government that is determined to stamp out dissent and rule forever."

I had pretty much the same suggestion to some friends who were working in the FPJ camp in 2004. I said I couldn't understand why they weren't using the GMA camp's charge that FPJ had no experience ("*walang karanasan*") for their own benefit. I said FPJ could always say, "But of course I have no experience. I have no experience lying, or telling my friends in show biz one thing and doing the opposite. I have no experience stealing, or siphoning from Mowelfund, which is money that goes to the stunt men and other foot soldiers of our trade when they retire from work or from life. I have no experience cheating or being fake or passing myself off as the king even if they call me Da King."

Never happened.

And still the opposition stands to lose more than opportunity if the latest SWS survey is correct. It reveals something most Filipinos already know, which is that GMA will cheat in these elections.

The question is: What in hell is it doing to stop it?

Different strategies

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT TEAM UNITY AND THE GENuine Opposition have at this point adopted different strategies to attain their respective goals. Given its limited resources, the obvious disunity in its ranks and its glaring lack of local candidates, GO appears to have given up on holding rallies. Instead, GO campaign manager Serge Osmeña is said to be concentrating the opposition's remaining resources on the media—buying radio and TV space for political ads and working to provide maximum exposure for the candidates, especially in the more anti-administration urban centers.

* * *

TU, on the other hand, seeks to minimize the political blows in Metro Manila and urban areas. It instead aims to maximize its campaign in provinces where there's no opposition and where its candidates are strong or in big administration bailiwicks. Doubtless challenged by surveys showing them at a disadvantage, TU candidates have been moving to cover a lot of ground. They were in Eastern Mindanao and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao a few days ago. Yesterday, they flew to Western Mindanao, campaigning in such places as Zamboanga City, Ipil and Pagadian. Next week TU will return to Davao, Cebu and Iloilo for big rallies, before winding up in Metro Manila.

Malacañang has also been busy drumming up support for them. For instance, President Macapagal-Arroyo recently invited to Malacañang 200 mayors running unopposed and she told them that since they don't have rivals, they can devote their entire time campaigning for TU's senatorial candidates.

* * *

Much has been said about the importance of the local machinery and command votes in delivering electoral victory. TU asserts that the local machinery would compensate for the popularity of some GO candidates. Tito Sotto yesterday related that he saw this phenomenon up close during the 2004 presidential election when opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. got zero in some places in the ARRM. In these elections, this experience could be repeated. Consider, for instance, the second district of Maguindanao, where Lakas Rep. Simeon Datumanong is the kingpin. In its 22 municipalities, with 212,000 registered voters, all the candidates, from ARRM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan down to the last councilor, are running unopposed. In such a situation, there's no need to cheat; all the local officials have to do is to campaign for TU candidates.

* * *

Over the past two Sunday evenings, Cecile Alvarez and I interviewed Joe Ledesma, St. Luke's Hospital's president for the past 11 years, and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo's chief attending physician, Dr. Juliet Gopez-Cervantes, in our regular dzRH program. I must say we've had few programs that proved as exciting and dramatic. Aside from the tremendous human and medical drama involved in the First Gentleman's extremely dangerous surgery and post-operative recovery, we reviewed its implication for the nation's health and prospects for Philippine medical tourism. Cervantes, a gastroenterologist/hepatologist, narrated that had the operation been delayed by half an hour, Arroyo might have died. Once they realized the problem, the doctors discussed it with GMA as clinically as they could, and she remained calm, exhorting them to "do what you have to do."

* * *

I queried Cervantes what made her suspect that the culprit was "dissecting aortic aneurysm," considering that the term was not even stated in the discharge sheet of the Baguio hospital. She said that the ways he kept tossing from side to side after being given medication for "chronic gastritis" was most unusual. She ordered an immediate work-up, beginning with routine chest X-ray which showed a hole in his aorta, later confirmed by CT-scan, etc. "Call it a 'clinical eye,' born out of long medical practice," said the doctor. She also narrated the enormous difficulties the medical team underwent in the next 48 hours of the critical post-surgery period, when a combination of factors seemed at first to conspire against his recovery. There were many miracles, she admitted, adding that the doctors were all praying with the family and relatives of Arroyo.

* * *

Ledesma narrated how the surgical team, composed of the hospital's topnotch specialists, was called in a rush on the morning of Araw ng Kagitingan. For instance, Dr. Rommel Cariño, the chief cardiovascular surgeon, was relaxing in the mall with his family. St. Luke's chief was proud of its capability and the expertise of its doctors, who gave their utmost in the next few days following the operation. But he also noted that there are now several RP hospitals that are well-equipped to undertake very sensitive operations and project the country well in the area of medical tourism. What's good about the recent developments that highlighted medical expertise at St. Luke's, said Ledesma, is that other hospitals are now striving to come up to its standards.

By the way, there was an interesting supplement on medical tourism recently run by the International Herald Tribune which compared medical standards in various Asian countries, including the Philippines. It acknowledged that RP's distinct advantage is the warmth and friendliness of our people—nothing less than TLC (tender loving care).

* * *

Tidbits:

• Reports say that Alan Cayetano's campaign is being heavily funded by San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, especially in "special ops" projects.

• Florencio Abad, campaign manager for Noynoy Aquino's senatorial bid, wrote to say that my April 19 claim that his candidate was in Hong Kong with other GO candidates to campaign among OFWs there was without basis. Abad said that while Aquino would have welcomed the opportunity to personally explain his platform to OFWs, his campaign commitments here prevented him from doing so.

Under siege on World Press Freedom Day

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

IT'S WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY TODAY AND the son of one of the country's media icons is missing. Abduction is the most likely reason for the disappearance of Jonas "Jay Jay" Burgos who was reportedly seen being taken away by unidentified men at a mall. Who were they? Where have they taken him? Why?

I hope this column would become stupid reading because Jason was found alive while I was writing this (yesterday). But this is not the case right now, while I am e-mailing this to the INQUIRER close to deadline time.

I've never used the press releases of those running for office but re-electionist Sen. Ralph Recto sent something well said, he could very well have said it for us, the members of the media (this is not a plug and I have not yet decided whether I will vote for him):

"The country owes the Burgos family a great deal of gratitude for the freedom it enjoys today (and) it should repay their valor by finding a missing kin. We cannot let the son of a great man who helped give us back our democracy be a victim of undemocratic methods his father strongly raged against. During dangerous times his father did not disappear for teaching us about freedom, so why should his son go missing for simply teaching some folks about farming in these supposedly normal times?"

Did Jason's abductors know he was the son of a media brave, a crusading journalist who suffered imprisonment and harassment so that we could enjoy our freedoms today? The late Jose "Joe" Burgos Jr. put his life, family and modest fortune on the line when he published We Forum—and, later, Malaya toward the end of the martial law years. His efforts certainly paid off when the Marcos dictatorship came crumbling down, with a lot of credit going to the so-called mosquito or alternative press that Joe was part of.

Today, let us remember Joe and pray for his missing son. At 6 p.m. the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines will lead a candle lighting ceremony at the Boys' Scout Circle on Timog Ave. There will be no speeches, only reading of poetry on press freedom. Come and join, you do not have to be a member of the media.

This is a tribute to the journalists who were killed in the line of duty—88 since 1986 when our freedoms were supposed to have been restored.

Joe died two years ago after a lingering illness. He may not have died a martyr but he gave much from the substance of his life. His name is now engraved on the Wall of Remembrance of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani (Monument for Heroes) that honors those who lived and died so that we could gain back our freedoms. The International Press Institute named Joe one of the world's 50 Press Freedom Heroes of the 20th century.

Today, as I go over the two slim volumes of "Press Freedom Under Siege," I am filled with nostalgia for those days when boldness in media meant reaping results, not attracting bullets which is the case these days.

One of the pieces is by human rights lawyer Joker P. Arroyo (a senator now running for reelection) who was my defense lawyer then. He wrote about Joe's woes: "Dec. 1982 was a chilling month for media. In a twin move, the government attempted to intimidate and hamstrung the press. On Dec. 8, 'We Forum' was shut down when military intelligence units stopped the opposition newspaper's presses, sequestered all its moveable equipment, vehicles and papers, and padlocked its offices. Editor Jose Burgos Jr. was arrested, detained, along with his staff and columnists. Even members of his production and circulation departments were hauled to jail.

"A week after, the National Intelligence Board, the country's highest intelligence body, summoned one after another, eight women journalists for interrogation at the forbidding grounds of an army camp..."

A lecture delivered by the revered former Sen. Jose W. Diokno to writers is also included in "Press Freedom Under Siege." This should be read by today's aspiring journalists. Spoke he:

"How, you may well ask, can we take those risks? In today's climate of fear, how can we afford to face those dangers?

"The answer, I suggest, is that it is precisely because of the climate of fear that we cannot afford not to face those dangers. We must damn the risks, and in a sense emulating our Moslem *juramentados*, say what must be said, and suffer the consequences. The alternative is to be, in Rizal's words, 'always running after butterflies and flowers' ('El Filibusterismo') and to die not only 'without seeing the dawn break over our country' ('Noli Me Tangere') but knowing that we have held back the dawn. Writers can lay down their pens and tear up their manuscripts but I know of no human—and writers are nothing if they are not human—who can completely silence his conscience.

"If your task is as dangerous as was Rizal's it is more difficult for at least two reasons. One is that today, the enemy is not as concrete, nor as obvious as the friar was .... The second difficulty lies in the clash of ideology that characterizes our situation. In Rizal's time, the conflict was clear-cut: self-determination against imperialism...

"But I do have but one request—which you are free to disregard: ... use a language that our people understand, not only with their minds but with their souls ... please write for the people, not the elite, the people of whom Elias said:

"'The people do not complain because they have no voice; they do not move because they are in a stupor; and you say that they do not suffer because you have not seen how their hearts bleed. But someday, you will see and hear!'" ("Noli Me Tangere")

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Political idealism

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE OTHER DAY, IN HIS BUSINESSWORLD column, Greg Macabenta wondered why, despite all the signs that this coming election will put the scandalous elections of 1949, 1986 and 2004 to shame—there "is no outrage, no indignation over the flagrant violations of the election law and the prospect of cheating in the polls and in the counting." Instead of "the kind of fanatical zeal that the anti-Marcos militants displayed in the months leading to and after the snap elections," all we have are "feeble protests" from civil society, "feeble criticisms" from media, and in the end, "nobody cares if anything comes out of their feeble noises."

Macabenta says this indifference stems from two reasons. The first is well-known, not least because it has been served as a favorite Palace line since 2005: politicians are all the same, anyway, so why bother to take sides, much less exert effort in support of one side? Not least because the sides that exist keep blurring the distinctions between them. The Left, for example, has thundered and shrilled about the way the administration is going after them, and then endorses two of the administration's senatorial candidates. They're all the same indeed.

In his column, Macabenta states what he himself says "is admitted only in whispers" up to now: "folks are afraid for their lives or for their businesses or for their careers," which means whatever may be their negative feelings about the government, they will never express it publicly, or if they do, only up to a point. He quotes a veteran journalist now living in the United States, who worked in the media during martial law: "These times are more perilous for journalists than during the Marcos regime."

Strong stuff, indeed, and I've heard businessmen say it, too. One such businessman, one of the truly big players in our economy, who fought martial law courageously, put it this way: "This president is scarier than Marcos ever was." Macabenta's observation is that there "seems to be a silent rule that those who would make noises can only do so up to a certain decibel. Beyond that, they could be sorry." To be sure, there are those who have pulled out all the stops, but in the case of such critics, "they have sustained their attacks for so long, and have been so consistent and unwavering in their criticism that their sting is no longer being felt."

Besides which, the existence of such critics ironically helps the administration: and this applies, not just in the case of media critics as Macabenta pointed out, but also in the case of people like Joker Arroyo. Look at me, Arroyo says. I was a pain in the neck but look, the people I made uncomfortable are now funding my campaign; I fought Charter change and those who will try to revive it later this year have made me their official candidate.

And the Left says Amen to Joker! Who gets the last laugh? The joke's on the Left, on Joker (to end his life as a human deodorant)—and on us, because what is the use of one Joker shrieking, when in the end he decides to ride to victory on the coattails of an administration that believes politics is merely—and only—"a numbers' game"?

Recently Carlos Conde of the International Herald Tribune asked my opinion on the elections, and among the answers I gave him, was that the middle class has essentially decided to boycott this election. In part, this is out of despair over being unable to influence the election results. However, I do think the middle will play a crucial role in rendering a verdict on the conduct, and thus the legitimacy, of the elections.

But in rendering that judgment, what will be left unsaid is under what pressures, real or imagined, will the middle class be operating? I've written time and again that the bulwarks of the middle—church, clubs and schools—have found themselves unable to arrive at a consensus on the crisis that broke out in 2005. For every Archbishop Oscar Cruz who uses his shepherd's staff to fight crooks, you have an Archbishop Fernando Capalla acting as an ecclesiastical Pollyanna. As for the princes of the Church, Cardinals Vidal and Rosales, the least said about them, the better.

When one group of Rotarians demanded accountability from Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante, the rest tried to hush them up; and when one group of Catholic educators, the La Salle Brothers, tried to stand up for right versus wrong, their alumni complained: at least in the Ateneo, alumni booed their fellow alumnus—the President's husband.

These are not ordinary times, and to throw in the towel because "they are all the same" is a copout.

At first I was puzzled by what he did, but I've decided to vote for Kiko Pangilinan: He, at least, decided to go it alone, to set himself apart from the others: there is no shame in what he has done, and only utter shame in what Joker has. For the same reason, I am voting for all three candidates of Ang Kapatiran, out of admiration for their daring to be different, and their refusal to surrender to cynicism. They may not win, but they will go down fighting—and theirs is a good, and decent fight.

My eight remaining senatorial votes are going to the Genuine Opposition. Originally, I intended to vote straight opposition. But it seems to me that this election is, among many things, as much about sending a message about the future we want as it is about all the other pressing issues of the day. The future is closer than we think: we will be facing a new round of tax increases, an effort to amend the Constitution to create a one-party state, and an attempt to settle old grudges against anyone who disagrees with the administration, including the Supreme Court, against which the opening salvo has been fired by Rick Saludo in his column castigating the Chief Justice.

Neverland

YOUNG BLOOD

Czeka Svetlana Tuvilla

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THE ONLY THING THAT CONVINCED ME TO STUDY IN THE school was the monthly allowance I would be getting. I expected almost everything else in my existence to be gruesome during the next four years.

Every weekday, I would have to wake up at 5 a.m., travel through three cities and pass endless sugarcane fields to get to the mental institution lost in the middle of nowhere. At night, I would have to stay up late, reviewing lessons and preparing for tests—and arise the next morning, only to realize that I needed to do what I had done the night before all over again.

I kept imagining this kind of high school life, which was far from what I had dreamed of. Instead of a normal curriculum, I would be loaded with advanced classes. Instead of late night-outs, I would be cramming for the exams. Instead of dance clubs, I would have to choose among the Cult of Math Wizards and Science Freaks' Society. Instead of dreamy popular jocks, I would have to put up with boring, socially isolated, *may-sariling-mundo* nerds.

This was not the high school I had seen in teen flicks. This was not the high school described by punk bands in their songs. This definitely was not Sweet Valley. But no matter how much these anxieties discouraged me, it seemed I was meant to study there.

All expectations became reality on my first day in school. They did not have a dance organization, no Orlando Bloom look-alike (although I had to admit, some came a little close), no neat lockers, no mirrors in the comfort rooms. The only thing I got was an assignment, on the first day of classes!

The following days brought more disappointments. Instead of a football field, we had a deserted savannah. Instead of a gym, we had a stage and a court that were totally exposed to carcinogenic radiation. Instead of a canteen, we had a *tiangge* and a few wooden tables and chairs that slowly sank into the muddy ground. Instead of malls and restaurants and the excitement of a bustling city life, we were surrounded by trees and *amorseco*, crazy dogs and crazy snakes, and the monotony of trucks passing by. And since the school was just six years old when I first enrolled, there was (and still is) a serious deficiency in physical resources.

Every morning, I felt nauseous after the long trip to get there. I was too lazy to copy notes. I was sleeping in class and struggling to keep up with the lessons, because I was always absent-minded.

Determined to have a decent high school life, I raved and ranted and told my parents that I needed to change schools. But by the time they came to agree with the idea, I had grown adverse to leaving. The first months may have been spent on making adjustments and throwing unnecessary tantrums, but what followed was incomparable fun.

You see, this school is a sanctuary for kids who have been deprived of their childhood. Many of the students have been pressured by their parents since they were young. Undeniably, their learning has made them bright, but it cost them their early years.

In our school, we lived in our own world. High school students enjoying jump rope, jackstone, Chinese garter and local favorites like "langit-lupa," "sekyu," "enter-enter," "tumba-patis" and "shakay" were not common. Boys and girls joined games of hide and seek and we hurt ourselves playing "Dr. Wak-wak." Some even pretended they were mutants and engage in Marvel vs. Capcom fights.

When we met other students from the urban schools, we could not help but compare how they were "more *dalaga*" or "more *binata*" than us. Most of our former classmates were more reserved and self-conscious.

Don't get me wrong. Our life was not all about games and fooling around. Peter Pan and his gang may not have grown up, but they learned how to find solutions when problems came their way, to fight for what they believed in. It was not easy to pass if you did not try hard. We were taught how to survive, how to be competitive, how to be resourceful and wise (we had to improvise if emergency struck because we were far from civilization, remember?), how to stand out, how to face unlikely situations, how to be productive and responsible people for society. The claim to being "the cream of the crop" was the result of quality training, diligence and perseverance.

We were serious about our studies. But that doesn't mean we didn't know how to unwind and relax and simply have a good time with our classmates. The extreme academic demands and the extreme excitement of being young created a unique balance that produced a new breed of students. Students who knew how to survive the ruthless race of life and enjoy the experience.

But the best thing I found in this school was that everyone was family. Our brilliant teachers were our friends and the small population made it possible to know almost every student (who were living proof that beauty, talent and brains could mix). You may not please everyone, but the many wonderful people reminded you that you were special. With the mental stress came misunderstandings and inspirations, cunning strategies and values that made us emotionally mature. (And honestly, I've never met a friendlier and a more approachable principal than the one we had.)

We had a half-covered court, collapsing walls and sandstorms. We had no telephone connection and intramural competitions. A tricycle ride to the school cost me P30. But while many people would consider these things discouraging, they actually helped make us better persons and better prepared since more of such things waited for us when we entered college and professional life.

I once had a dream: I was riding on the side car of a tricycle, back to back with another person. I saw the main building standing proud among tall sugar stalks and trees. It held its usual simple charm. No, it did not show age nor did it show signs of falling down. The sight was heartwarming, the facade brought back smiles and tears as well as memories of successes and failures, of friends and enemies, of bonding and competitions, sleeping and cramming sessions, the foot walk, the duel academy, scandals, intellectual monsters, terror teachers, terror students, rallies, corny jokes, the pink room, the blue room. All these I would not exchange for better facilities and a JS prom, I thought.

Suddenly I noticed that the scenery seemed to be getting farther and farther away from me. Then I realized it was I who was moving away. I didn't want to get out of this place. I had found a refuge for my eccentric soul, a second home where I could be young and happy amid all the social and mental pressures.

But no one can stay in their comfort zones all the time. One day, we all need to step out and face the real world. I had found Neverland, and now I was leaving it.

And just like Wendy, and (almost) all who had graduated from this school, I will always yearn for this place and relive the moments and the memories.

Czeka Svetlana Tuvilla, 17, graduated from the Negros Occidental Science High School last April 1.

Youth to join prayer vigils for orderly, honest elections

THE PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS have always been associated with fraud, violence and irregularities. Thus, elections seem to have become a waste of time, government funds and efforts especially because only a few of the people's demands for reforms are addressed, if at all.

The manner by which elections are conducted impact greatly on democracy and the youth's future. According to the Center for People's Empowerment in Governance (Cenpeg), an independent non-stock, non-profit think tank and an alternative school for people empowerment in governance, the right to vote is the highest form of expression of the people's sovereign will to elect and install their own government. This right is universal, inalienable and inviolable. By respecting this right, you also respect the person's human dignity. Therefore, fraudulent and violent elections not only put in doubt the competence and credibility of incumbent leaders, they also insult the people.

Meanwhile, youth participation in Philippine elections is one of the significant issues in the electoral system. The youth want our society's ailing political and economic conditions righted. In the 2004 national elections, the youth constituted 40 percent of the voting population.

The important task of the Filipino youth at this time is to join hands with the rest of the Filipino people in promoting peaceful and honest elections. Youth VOTE (Youth Volunteers for an Orderly and Transparent Elections) calls on all young Filipinos to participate in the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' nine-day prayer vigil (Holy Hours) beginning May 5 to May 14.

Youth VOTE will also join an "Alay Lakad" in the early morning of May 5, the first day of the Holy Hours. Participants of this activity will gather at the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City and march toward the Rizal Shrine at the Luneta Park for a symbolic ceremony.

Let us all keep alive the hopes that our people find in truly democratic elections. Let us all help secure a brighter future for our country's coming generations.

—JOSE COSIDO,
convenor, Youth VOTE,
59B Mapagkawanggawa St.,
Teachers' Village, Quezon City

Watch out, GMA's brand of democracy is at work

"DEMOCRACY IS AT WORK." THIS was the claim of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in her speech at the graduation ceremonies of the Philippine Military Academy.

We wonder: Is democracy at work when political activists are brutally killed and persecuted? Is democracy at work when journalists who write investigative reports on corruption and other critical issues are sued by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo for libel?

Incidentally, GMA's message came out on the same day the nation witnessed on TV the brutish attempt of the Manila police to transfer Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo to a provincial jail. Like thieves breaking into a house in the most unholy hours, police forces assaulted Ka Satur's rights and dignity as they awakened and dragged him to a vehicle at 3 a.m. of March 19 for a grueling flight to Leyte.

Apparently, GMA's brand of democracy would deprive those who expose government corruption and espouse the politics of change. Ka Satur and Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran are imprisoned on fabricated crimes while those who commit massive plunder, corruption, extrajudicial killings and other grave human rights abuses remain scot-free.

On the other hand, democracy is again about to be betrayed. The machinery for fraud and violence used in the past elections has not been dismantled. Despite a memorandum of agreement between the Department of National Defense and the Commission on Elections (Comelec) on the military's non-interference in the coming elections, Comelec officials reportedly have expressed willingness to deputize government soldiers to complement the police forces that will "guard" polling precincts; and they have left unquestioned the military deployment in non-conflict urban and rural communities, despite the reported harassment and vilification campaign directed against Bayan Muna and other progressive party-list groups.

Apparently, GMA's brand of democracy wants the police and military to wipe out the groups and personalities crying out loud against the failures of her administration.

—FR. JERRY SABADO, OCarm,
spokesperson, Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR), 879 Edsa, Quezon City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Sadly, command votes do exist

I FELT INSULTED BY RINA JIMENEZ-DAVID'S column wherein she downplayed the administration's political machineries. (INQUIRER, 4/10/07) How could she buy the opposition's argument which cited the 1992 and 1998 election results? The comparison is not appropriate, considering that those were presidential elections.

In my opinion, the May 2007 election resemble more that of the 1987 senatorial elections, where the administration controlled the local political fields and the opposition had no or little financial support. And the administration was able to capitalize on those advantages. Even their lesser-known candidates, like Mamintal Tamano and Santanina Rasul, performed better in the elections and were able to beat the political heavyweights of the opposition such as former Senators Eva Kalaw and Arturo Tolentino.

That election was so lopsided that out of the 24 senatorial slots contested, only two went to the candidates of the Grand Alliance for Democracy: Joseph Estrada and Juan Ponce Enrile. If Bobbit Sanchez's bid wasn't derailed by Gil Sanchez, a nuisance candidate; and Ramon Revilla didn't commit the blunder of using his baptismal name instead of his screen name, the outcome could have been different.

This may be sad to say, but command votes exist, and we would be blind or dumb to deny it.

—JOHN DEE,
jon_dee01@yahoo.com

Pensioners always in GSIS' mind

IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER of Erlinda P. Villanueva, "Useless imposition on pensioners" (INQUIRER, 4/12/07), please allow us to clarify three points.

First, the rate increase in pension is not fixed and permanent; neither is it arbitrarily done. The percentage increase always takes into consideration the financial capability of the GSIS Social Insurance Fund (SIF). It varies annually depending on actuarial studies.

As a guiding principle, therefore, pension benefits are granted without endangering the viability of the SIF, while ensuring that all current and future beneficiaries get their benefits as they fall due. The Christmas cash gift for pensioners, as the name implies, is not a mandated benefit. Limiting the grant of this privilege to the main pensioners is a necessary and actuarially sound decision.

Second, the release of survivorship pensions was delayed due to the database cleansing (completed in March 2007). The cleansing was triggered by the discovery that only 66,000 of the 81,000 survivorship pensioners are qualified to receive the benefit. This meant that the GSIS has been incurring a financial leak of about P36 million per month in payment of survivorship benefits to unqualified beneficiaries, or P432 million per year.

In the case of Villanueva, our records show that she is an active survivorship pensioner. Despite the delay in the early part of that year, her pension has been regularly released and mailed to her, including that for April.

Third, the GSIS implemented the eCard program precisely with the condition of pensioners, like her, and the life of their fund in mind. It aims to expedite the payment of monthly pensions and to give pensioners the opportunity to enjoy the full benefits of their pensions. Through the eCard's electronic crediting facility, pensions are credited directly to their account, sparing them from unscrupulous persons taking advantage of pensioners through the practice of discounting pension checks.

Pensioners are also able to comply now with the annual physical reporting requirement of the GSIS through validation using their eCard Plus in our kiosks located in GSIS offices nationwide.

Before the eCard was introduced, pensioners needed to wait for weeks to have their checks mailed, deposited, cleared and encashed. Pension checks were likewise subjected to theft and misdelivery. Unreported changes in addresses also resulted in return and cancellation of pension checks. Worst, spurious GSIS checks proliferated.

We thank Villanueva for her suggestion to use the old check system, but it would be irrational to continue maintaining the check system when a superior payment system through the eCard can do the job more efficiently and effectively.

We assure Villanueva and the rest of our pensioners that we are doing our best to improve our service—all for their benefit and satisfaction.

—ELLA E. VALENCERINA,
vice president,
Public Affairs Office,
Government Service Insurance System,
Financial Center, Pasay City

AFP's self-reliance program worked

THIS IS A REACTION TO TARRA Quismundo's article on military research and development which, according to her, has been there but has not gone beyond attempts. (INQUIRER, 4/27/07) This is not true, and I write this letter to set the historical records straight and to honor the memory of the pioneering officers and men who are no longer around.

The Philippine government launched the Self-Reliant Defense Posture Program (SRDP) in the 1970s after the United States withheld its military assistance for the Philippines. The US government claimed that the insurgency was an internal problem and not covered by the Mutual Defense Treaty.

Contrary to what Quismundo wrote, the program made the AFP, in partnership with the private sector, self-sufficient in the 1970s when it came to its basic needs.

Under the SRDP, the following were manufactured in the 1970s and 1980s:

- 172,500 M16A1 rifles
- 230,000 rounds of 60 and 81 mm mortar ammo
- 6,600 jeeps (mini-cruisers)
- 500 pieces 60 mm mortars
- About 30,000 tactical radio sets
- 50 million caliber 5.56 rounds of ammo
- 150,000 pieces of aluminum magazines for M16 rifles
- 50,000 steel helmets
- 150,000 fragmentation hand grenades
- 30,000 assorted gun barrels
- 80,000 rifle grenades
- 10,000 pieces of 25-lb practice bombs
- mortar fuzes
- 120,000 bayonets
- 120,000 jungle bolos
- 25 fiberglass patrol boats

Also under the SRDP, a three-fourths ton 4x4 vehicle and a one-and-a-half ton 6x6 truck were made ready for mass production.

As with other undertakings pursued with the use of local technology, a few SRDP projects encountered some problems but these were attended to. It is gratifying to note that all the above-mentioned items, except for the M16A1 rifles, were manufactured without foreign technology and assistance, proving the capability of the Filipino.

On the whole, the SRDP was a success. However, when the pioneering batch of officers and men in the AFP headquarters and other major services retired, the program became less and less appreciated; it was even maligned and downgraded.

The DND Modernization Program, which wholly relies on importation, was subsequently introduced. The local industry's capability was forgotten altogether.

Is there no more trust in the Filipino?

As of now, the PAF (Philippine Air Force) Research and Development Center, headed by Col. Carlos Liwanag and directly under the Air Logistics Command of Maj. Gen. Fernando Manalo, manages the local manufacture of the 260-lb GPLD bomb, which the PAF used to import. Also, some 2.75" HE rocket warheads have been manufactured locally by the PAF. It is hoped that there will be no more importation of these types of bombs and rocket warheads.

It is never a good idea to rely on foreign sources for our defense needs when there is a local capability to produce them.

—COL. JOSE GUILLEM, PA (ret.),
joe_guillem@yahoo.com

Tears for a desecrated campus

I AM A VIRGINIA TECH ALUMnus who's now in the Philippines.

Back in Virginia, I lived on Kent Street—a picturesque looping street that starts from a residential neighborhood and bends into the Tech campus.

Norris Hall was just a five-minute walk from where I lived, and so was Johnston Ambler and a host of older dormitories that dotted the periphery of the campus' drill field (the equivalent of the sunken garden in UP Diliman).

My nearly six-year stay in Virginia Tech made me overly familiar with many site details of the massacre—too familiar that I am moved to tears when I'm reminded that the sacred pathways where I spent many relaxing moments with fellow academics have been desecrated by an indescribably angry young man.

—MICHAEL SANTOS,
michael.santos@themangofarm.com

Hope to see more 'military women'

I READ WITH GREAT ADMIRATION the article "Woman No. 1 mistah of PMA Class 2007" (INQUIRER 3/15/07) by Frank Cimatu. The achievement of Cadet First Class Andrelee Mojica of Indang, Cavite in topping the PMA Maragtas (Marangal na Tagapagligtas) Class 2007 is no joke.

As the valedictorian of her class, Mojica was so humble that she only said, "It is an honor to represent the women of our country." Going through four years of rigorous military training is in itself a feat.

I hope many more women will serve in the Army, Navy or Air Force in defense of freedom and democracy.

—TRINIDAD ESTURAS PETEZA,
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Cebu gov strikes back, accuses prober of bias

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—CEBU GOV. GWENDOLYN GARCIA sued the top official of the Ombudsman-Visayas for alleged bias in the investigation of irregularities in the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) and alleged overprice of lampposts installed for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit.

Garcia filed administrative and criminal charges against acting Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas Virginia Palanca-Santiago for allegedly showing bias in the CICC inquiry.

Garcia, through her counsel, also asked Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez to assign a non-Cebuano graft investigator to handle the fact-finding inquiry and to order Santiago to inhibit from the case.

The local antigraft office is conducting a fact-finding investigation after a local contractor filed a complaint alleging the CICC was overpriced by at least P150 million and that the bidding was highly irregular.

Garcia accused Santiago of partiality and bad faith in handling the CICC investigation.

She said Santiago violated Rule 5 of the antigraft law, which prohibits graft investigators from issuing premature statements on cases being investigated until the inquiry is completed and a resolution has been issued.

Garcia's complaint stemmed from Santiago's pronouncements in a local daily where Santiago was quoted as saying "they are already on guard," which reportedly referred to provincial officials linked to the alleged overpricing of the CICC.

Garcia told reporters that Santiago already pre-judged the case by showing bias and partiality as an investigator.

Santiago, however, refused to comment on Garcia's allegations saying she would rather wait for action from the Ombudsman's central office.

Lawyer Pablo John Garcia, the governor's brother and legal consultant, also asked Ombudsman Gutierrez to place Santiago under preventive suspension.

Garcia, eight other provincial government officials and an architect are facing a plunder case after contractor Cris Saavedra filed a plunder case against them.

In his complaint with the Ombudsman, Saavedra linked Garcia and the others to the alleged overpricing of the CICC.

He alleged that the CICC project was divided into six to eight smaller contracts "to get away with normal bidding procedures required in all government projects."

Saavedra also named Cebu Vice Gov. Gregorio Sanchez, provincial bids and awards committee members provincial treasurer Roy Salubre, provincial engineer Adolfo Quiroga, project engineer Ernesto Biernes, budget officer Emmy Hingoyon, provincial engineer Euly Pilayre, provincial lawyer Mariano Martinquilla and Ed Habin and architect-consultant Manuel Guanzon.

Saavedra said the provincial government bid out the CICC foundation works but divided the other project components into several contracts.

He attached to his complaint several vouchers and lists of expenses, memorandum receipts, official receipts, disbursement vouchers reflecting an aggregate amount of P537.6 million, covering 17 items.

"The complainant is convinced that the Cebu provincial government funds of not less than P50 million were misappropriated, misused or malversed through a pattern of overt or criminal acts indicative of overall unlawful scheme or conspiracy among Cebu provincial officials and the contractors," Saavedra said.

Garcia denied the allegations and promised to present a public accounting of the CICC expenses today to refute speculations surrounding the controversial project.

BOXING champion Manny Pacquiao is welcomed by Rep. Darlene Antonino Custodio upon his arrival at the General Santos City airport after his latest victory in Las Vegas. INQUIRER PHOTO

GenSan cops can't find kill-Pacquiao plot report

COTABATO CITY—POLICE RE-ceived no report of any plot to kill boxing champion Manny Pacquiao or his rival, Rep. Darlene Antonino Custodio, and expressed surprise at the reported plot.

Pacquiao, in a TV interview, had said the man who was hired to kill him was paid P20 million.

But a check with the Maritime Command, from which the report was supposed to have come, showed that the report revealing the supposed plot doesn't exist.

"Hired guns do not announce their plan," Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio, Central Mindanao police chief, said when asked about the supposed plot against the two politicians.

Serapio said despite the absence of evidence that the plot existed, the police would continue to secure the rival candidates.

"Although both camps have security escorts, the police are doing everything to prevent poll violence here," he said.

Custodio, in a press statement, said Pacquiao had stooped low in the campaign by announcing the supposed plot.

"How he (Pacquiao) could have fallen to such cheap propaganda gimmick is understandable. What is bothering me is the fact that he is already popular owing to his great boxing career, and there is no need for him to resort to this," said Custodio.

Custodio said her family felt alluded when Pacquiao announced the alleged plot against his life.

"The accusation that we are plotting to kill a national icon is not only absurd but stupid considering it was to Manny Pacquiao whom the Commission on Elections had approved the granting of 20 gun permits," she said.

The alleged plot was announced as a grenade was tossed into the headquarters of a reelectionist mayor in North Cotabato but failed to explode on Tuesday.

Insp. Nelson Lumugdang, acting police chief of Tulunan town, said the pin of the grenade was missing when it was found at 5:30 a.m. at the office of Mayor Nestor Taasan (Kampi). *Aquiles Zonio and Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Comelec won't probe vote-buying sans formal complaint

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE COMMISSION on Elections supervisor in Pampanga urged reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid and Fr. Eddie Panlilio to present witnesses and evidence in the alleged vote-buying by their rival in the gubernatorial race, Board Member Lilia Pineda.

"Those who have personal knowledge of the alleged incidents have to file their sworn statements and we will make sure we will [conduct] a full investigation of those matters," said Temie Lambino, Comelec provincial supervisor.

As of Wednesday, Lambino said his office has yet to receive formal complaints from Lapid and Panlilio or from the three other gubernatorial candidates—lawyer Elly Pamatong, retired teacher Edna Guillermo and Ronald Maniago.

Pineda has not filed any complaint either, Lambino said.

Lapid's campaign manager, Fidel Arcenas, said lawyers continued to gather testimony from witnesses.

Dante David, head of Panlilio's legal team, said the documentation of the incidents and other legal issues were being carefully done in consultation with election lawyer Romulo Macalintal, who volunteered to help Panlilio.

What the Lapid and Panlilio camps were referring to were the alleged herding by Pineda of between 1,000 and 5,000 voters to cockpits, gymnasiums and school compounds since April 24.

Attendees in those supposed caucuses were given P200, P300 or P500, the two camps said, citing the reports of their campaign coordinators.

The incidents reportedly took place in the City of San Fernando and in the towns of Bacolor, Guagua, San Simon, Minalin and Macabebe.

Pineda has confirmed the meetings at the Mabuhay Coliseum here. But those, she clarified, never intended to gather people and buy their votes.

She said she gathered them because they live in remote villages and that she needed to inform them of her platform.

She denied paying them or promising them anything, except vowing to have "graft-free and pro-poor governance" should she win.

On Wednesday, the supposedly second set of Pineda's planned caucuses in Bacolor and Guagua were postponed.

"My conscience is clear. I will not buy votes," said Pineda in a telephone interview on Wednesday.

But several sources said voters were also selling votes by taking advantage of Pineda's "kindness." Pineda is known to help cancer patients and needy people.

Arcenas said Pineda's husband, suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, had met local officials, leaders of various sectors and public school teachers.

Lapid said seeking out public school teachers was "unusual" because by law, they are supposed to serve as chairs of the board of election inspectors. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Earthquake in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—An earthquake with a magnitude of 4.4 in the Richter scale jolted residents here on Wednesday morning, but no report of casualties or damages was recorded by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology. A Phivolcs bulletin said the quake, with epicenter at 38 km south of La Trinidad, Benguet, struck at 9:05 a.m. and was felt at Intensity 3 in Baguio, 2 in San Fernando City in La Union, and 1 in San Manuel, Pangasinan. It was caused by movements at the Digdig fault.

Gobleth Moulic, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Bus burned in Iligan City

LINAMON, Lanao del Norte—Three armed men burned a bus in Sta. Filomena in Iligan City on Saturday night. SPO1 Mahatma Baholo, of the Sta. Filomena police, said Rural Transit Bus, with body No. 1344, was on the highway in Sitio Barinaot when three armed passengers ordered the driver, identified as Bienvenido Berdano, to stop. When it did, the gunmen ordered the passengers and the bus conductor to leave. Soon after, the suspects shot Berdano then set the bus afire with Berdano still in it. The bus came from Dipolog City and was on its way to Cagayan de Oro City when the attack happened at around 10 p.m.

Inquirer Mindanao

18 minors held for joining NPA

CEBU CITY—The government captured at least 18 minors recruited by the New People's Army (NPA) in the Visayas in the past three years, said Lt. Col. Oscar Lasangue, head of the Civil Relations Service of the Central Command. Lasangue said the minors, whose ages ranged from nine to 16 years old, were captured in encounters in Iloilo City, Negros provinces, Cebu, Bohol, Samar and Southern Leyte. Some surrendered to the government. The military said the minors were turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Jolene R. Bulambot, Inquirer Visayas

Shooting spoils mayor's rally

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A shooting involving a policeman briefly spoiled a political rally of Tanauan City Mayor Sonia Aquino on Monday night. But Tanauan police chief Supt. Francisco Rodriguez said the attack on PO1 Bimbo Nañasca was not politically motivated. Nañasca, a resident of the city, is with the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group office in Mindoro. Rodriguez said the victim was in a chair near the barangay hall in Barangay Tinurik at about 9:30 p.m. when Tereso Malabanan approached him and shot him at close range with an improvised shotgun. The victim was able to take cover and only suffered a bullet wound in the left shoulder. Malabanan fled and is being hunted.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Dynamite fishing materials seized

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Police ruled out a terror plan following the seizure of several materials used in making improvised explosives on Monday in Olongapo City. The 75 kilograms of potassium nitrate, 10 meters of detonating cord and 300 pieces of blasting caps turned out to be materials for dynamite fishing, according to Senior Supt. Angelito Pacia, Olongapo City police chief. Police arrested two suspects, Merlita Nambayan and Ricky Bautista, while they were unloading the stocks at a bus terminal in Olongapo.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

Comelec looks for witness

BAGUIO CITY—THE Commission on Elections has started looking for the whistleblower who uploaded a video clip in the Internet that showed how a party-list group may have violated rules on campaign contributions.

"We need to follow a process here. The Comelec takes the role of a trial court during elections [but it] cannot prosecute cases. Someone has to file it so Comelec can judge the merits of the complaint," said Maribelle Uminga, city election supervisor.

The clip, still showing at www.youtube.com, shows a nominee of Coop Natcco Network Party discussing how a campaign contributor earned dividends from the party's Priority Development Assistance Fund.

A viewer had posted a comment made by Cresente Paez, Coop Natcco president, to defend party-list nominee Jose Ping-ay, who spoke during a meeting with cooperatives here on April 3. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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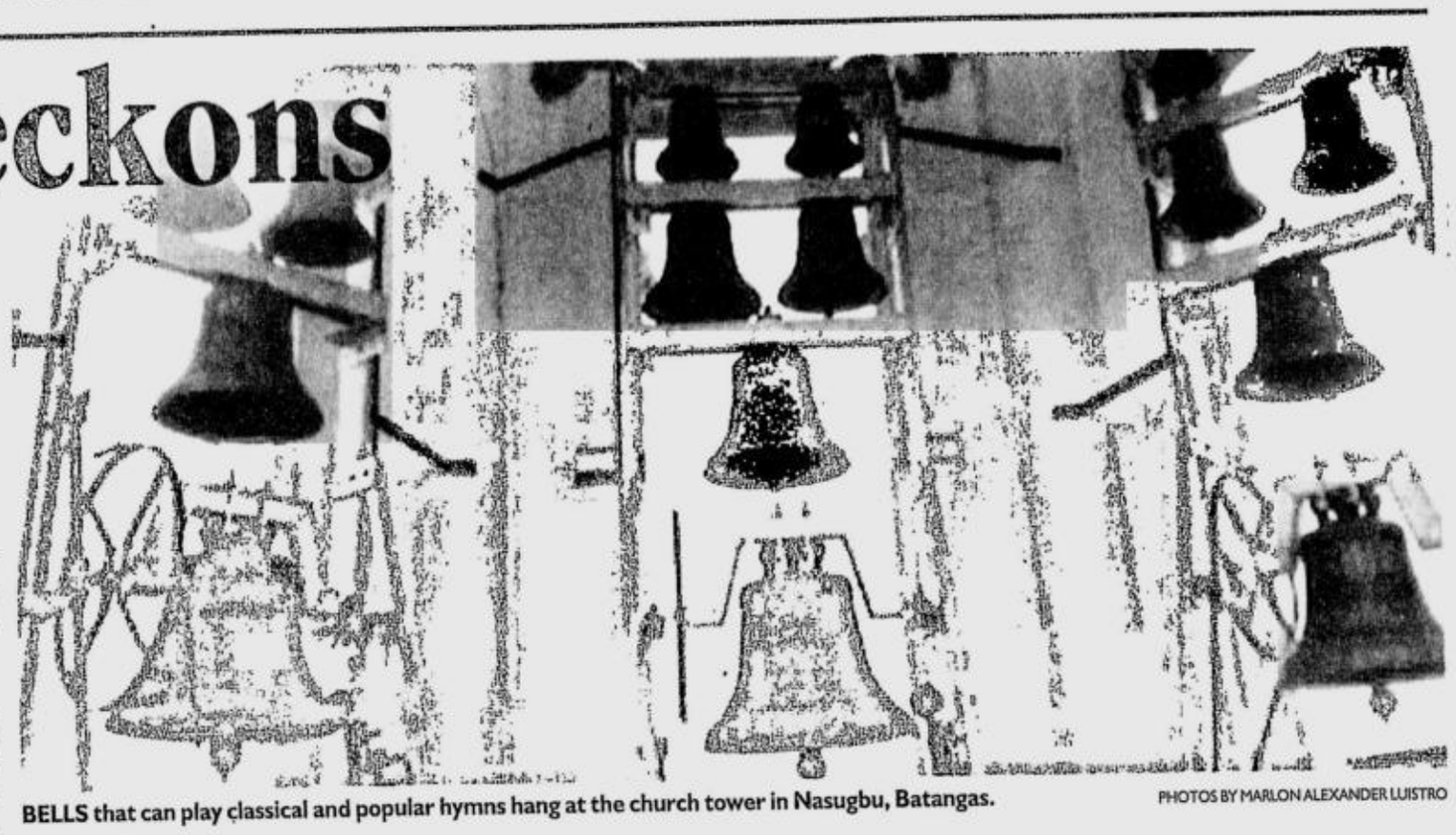
Carillon beckons Nasugbu



BELLS that can play classical and popular hymns hang at the church tower in Nasugbu, Batangas. PHOTOS BY MARLON ALEXANDER LUISTRO

By Marlon Alexander Luistro
Nasugbu, Batangas

THE FIRST TIME HE HEARD A carillon's melodious peals was in a Marian pilgrimage in Lourdes, France, in the 1980s.

"My attention was caught by the bells, making music to the tune of Ave Maria," Msgr. Alfredo Madlangbayan, 65-year-old priest of the St. Francis Xavier Church in Nasugbu, Batangas, said.

Since then, it had been Madlangbayan's dream to install a carillon—an instrument of many bells capable of playing music ranging from classical to popular hymns—in any church he would be designated in the province.

His dream was finally realized on Dec. 3 last year, when the carillon installed at the St. Francis Xavier's Church played Christmas carols and Marian songs. The scene also highlighted the celebration of the 500th birth anniversary of the town's patron, St. Francis Xavier.

"The community was excited because my parishioners had not heard a single sound of a bell for 15 years. I could remember people looking at the bells with amazement," Madlangbayan said.

No less than Dean Raul Sunico, a world-renowned pianist from the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music, voluntarily prepared the songs in two musical scales, which can be simulated in the bells' electronic program.

Today's church bells are usually hung in towers and rung by ropes. A hinged clapper strikes the body of each bell.

The carillon, however, plays music without anybody pulling ropes or striking the hollow instruments. One simply presses buttons in a small box attached to a wall beside the altar.

Anybody can hear the carillon, but to see how each of the bell plays, one has to climb at least 200 steps up the tower in three spiral stairways and two wooden ladders.

Rener Concepcion, play director and a Nasugbu native close to Madlangbayan, quoted writer Prof. A.J. Barnouw of Columbia University in New York as saying: "The art of making fine true-toned carillon does not lend itself to mass production."

In the Philippines, one hears the melodious sound in only a few places, like Alabang,

ST. FRANCIS Xavier's Church in Nasugbu. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marikina City, University of the Philippines in Diliman and Ateneo, Concepcion says.

Octaves

Carillons have two to six octaves and from 23 to 77 bells, the Guild Carilloners of North America said in its website. It is, however, desirable to have a range of 4 to 4½ octaves in 47-56 bells since almost all carillon music can be played on such an instrument, it said.

Nasugbu's carillon plays in two musical scales of 18 bells—three are swinging big bells (moving to and fro and making sounds in each movement) and 15 are fixed (do not move and are struck by clappers outside), each producing a distinct tone set by its manufacturer in France. Thus, 18 bells mean 18 notes.

The music usually starts with the swinging bells and ends with the fixed ones, according to Madlangbayan.

Beginnings

Most of the church bells in Batangas province are giant bells coming from Mexico or Spain. Today, only the bells in Lipa City and Bauan town have remained functional, Madlangbayan said.

Initially, he dreamed of having a carillon installed at the San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa, where he was parish priest. In fact, an agent from the Netherlands had reportedly offered a set on bargain terms, and Madlangbayan had even asked for a design and how to integrate the carillon with the ancient giant bell of the cathedral.

The plan did not materialize as Madlangbayan had to place priority on the repair of the deteriorating pipe organ.

But "when the pipe organ was finally repaired, it was time for me to leave the parish," said Madlangbayan.

In October 2004, he was assigned to the St. Francis Xavier Parish, which had been constructing its church building for a decade.

Madlangbayan learned that the church didn't have its own bell so he seized an opportunity to fulfill his dream. He started to raise funds from individuals, families, groups and other donors, each pledging to sponsor a particular bell. In gratitude, the names of the donors would be inscribed on the bells.

Divine intervention

Madlangbayan was about to close a deal with an agent from the Netherlands, when a priest friend suggested the famous bell foundry, Paccard-Fonderie de Cloches of Annecy in France.

The company was popular for making the World Peace Bell in the United States, regarded as the largest functioning swinging bell and weighing 66,000 pounds. With clapper and supports, the total weight which swings when the bell is tolled is 89,390 lbs.

Although the Nasugbu carillon cost P4.4 million, Madlangbayan said divine intervention didn't make it difficult for him to raise the money in two years.

"I feel happy that the idea (of having a carillon bell) was well-accepted by the community. It's very much like the same miracle in the church building, which unlike the bells, I didn't dream of doing," he said.

The bells arrived in October last year. Madlangbayan said he had planned to have the carillon installed and rung in his birthday on Nov. 21.

The biggest of the 18 bells weighed 320 kilos while the smallest weighed 55 kilos. These kinds of bell, Madlangbayan said, are guaranteed to last a hundred years.

But it would take one more month before the bronze carillon would finally be released.

From there comes a giant clock as the bell foundry's bonus or giveaway, installed at the church tower, which illuminates at night and has a reserve battery for 10 years.

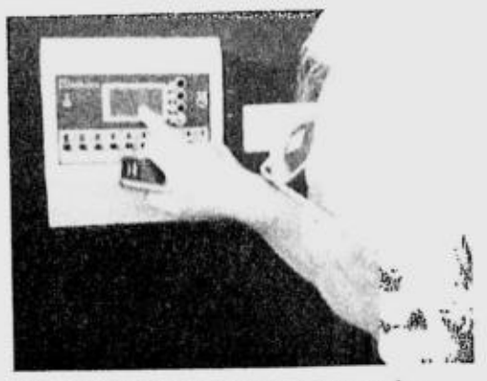
The set was displayed for two days on the church steps before it was blessed. They were brought up the tower by crane machines.

The residents first heard the bell music during a sound test on Dec. 3, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, producing Marian and Christmas tunes. Four days later, the carillon had its premiere, coinciding with the blessing and inauguration of the newly renovated church on a 1,600-square-meter lot.

Concepcion said the carillon played "difficult" pieces on Dec. 23, such as the "Carol of the Bells" and contrapuntal melodies, which he considered Madlangbayan's Christmas gift to the parishioners.

Renewal

"My belief is that new aesthetics will renew the church and a big factor for the renewal is when the people's hearts are moved and spirits are lifted," Madlangbayan said.



BY PRESSING buttons in a box near the church altar, the pealing of the carillon starts.

In his 41 years as a priest, Madlangbayan always believed that the way to convince parishioners to attend church celebrations was to make its building beautiful to the eyes.

"Everything was so miraculous that the church became beautiful so fast and easy as if St. Francis Xavier was leaving it to us. It is as if God so designed the church that I would have the right person at the right time—architect, engineer, masons, carpenters, painters and sculptors," he added.

Madlangbayan said he wanted other parishes to follow his experience.

"Before the bell arrived, people would merely see the church building as an edifice and they wouldn't give time to meditate and contemplate," said Dr. Alberto Wonchai, a Nasugbu native and active member of the parish.

"Now, upon hearing the carillon, people, including tourists, would stop and listen to it, look at the Church and realize that what they are facing is the house of God. That's the ultimate result. It is the essence of attraction that makes the bell so essential, something that would stimulate the senses," he said.

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Palace rebuffs Salonga: Esperon, checkpoints stay

From page A1

the good senator and the public that all his concerns are being attended to, and that we are going to do everything to uphold democratic principles, especially in the conduct of the elections. We will ensure that the salient points of his letter, like the involvement of the military in the elections, are being [addressed] to his and the people's satisfaction."

'So be it'

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye announced that Ms Arroyo would stand by her decision to call out the military in the wake of escalating election violence:

"The President will not stand idly by as election year thugs try and ruin our May elections. It would be irresponsible for [her] not to do everything in her power to stop violence and ensure free and fair elections, and safe and protected voters and candidates for public office.

"If putting police and soldiers on the street to protect our citizens will help, so be it."

In talking about Ms Arroyo's response to Salonga's concerns, Ermita said the mobile and fixed checkpoints would stay in place because these were precisely intended to deter armed groups and troublemakers from sowing mayhem and intimidating voters on Election Day.

"I think the concept of deploying police and military checkpoints will work very well in Basilan, so the people will not fear going to polling places to exercise their right to vote, and this is true in other places in the Philippines," Ermita said.

He said it was the duty of the Philippine National Police and the AFP as Comelec deputies to keep peace and order during the elections.

"Criminal elements are encouraged if they do not see the presence of authorities, meaning the PNP supported by the AFP, and it is not far-fetched that some elements might deliberately [do violence] to show that this government is not capable of conducting orderly and peaceful elections," Ermita said.

"We want to assure our people that the AFP and the PNP will not do things that are not ordered by the Comelec, [which is] the paramount authority in the conduct of orderly and peaceful elections," he said.

Military pullout

Ermita also said the AFP had announced it would pull out the troops deployed in depressed barangays in Metro Manila but might redeploy them after May 14. He said it was up to Esperon to decide on the redeployment.

"Malacanang would not wish to ... dictate to them to pull out or not, because that is a tactical decision on the part of the military commander," he said.

Ermita said there was no point in calling for the replacement of Esperon, one of the generals implicated in the purported cheating in the 2004 presidential election.

As for Salonga's comparing of Esperon to Gen. Fabian Ver, the dictator Ferdinand Marcos' chief of staff, Ermita said: "I was already in [military] service at that time, and I can say that there is no basis to compare the conduct or demeanor of General Esperon ... to what has been [said] against General Ver.

He said military commanders like Esperon had "a duty to do."

"[Esperon] is very conscious that his actions and those of the members of the AFP are under close scrutiny. And you can be very sure that they will do what is mandated of them—to safeguard the electoral process, assist the PNP in the maintenance of peace and order, follow the instructions of the Comelec, and ensure peaceful elections," Ermita said.

On the Esperon-Ver comparison, the military, through AFP information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, also said as much: "Things are totally different, underlying situations are not similar."

Bacarro added that Esperon "enjoys the trust, confidence and support of the AFP," and that "an upheaval [in the AFP] is too far from reality."

In a text message, Bacarro said Esperon respected Salonga's "personal opinion" but noted that the latter had based that opinion on "perception brought about by surveys."

"Surveys will be different based on [their] reason and intent," Bacarro said.

In full control

Ermita likewise said Ms Arroyo was in full control despite the resurgence of election violence and continued attacks on journalists and leftist activists.

He was responding to Dagupan-Lingayen Archbishop Oscar Cruz's statement to the INQUIRER on Tuesday that with "the way the killings go on," the Commander in Chief appeared to be "no longer in command."

"That is not true," Ermita said, pointing out that Ms Arroyo had to "order" the AFP to help the police disband private armies, set up checkpoints and stop political killings.

"That was [quickly] carried out the other day. Which means that she acts as President and Commander in Chief to ensure that the greater interest of the majority of our people is protected," he said, adding:

"What they're saying—that the orders of the President are not being followed—is not true. She continues to be respected as the President and Commander in Chief, and that's exactly how things are."

Ermita said it was needless to repeat that "the source of the comment" was a known critic of Ms Arroyo.

"What can I say? Everyone is free to have his own comment about anything," Ermita said. "Let's just say that we will prove that what he said is not true and not correct."

Learning curve

In announcing that Ms Arroyo would not appoint the seventh Comelec commissioner before May 14, Ermita said "some members" of the poll body had agreed that there was "a learning curve" for a new appointee.

"[With] roughly 12 days from Election Day, it may not be prudent and advisable to get somebody ... The President has to [study] the qualifications of [the prospective appointee], and [she] is very careful about it," he said.

Ermita said that as in her recent appointments, Ms Arroyo wanted to appoint to the poll body someone "acceptable to the private sector" and who would "not attract criticisms."

He quoted the Comelec commissioners as saying that the six of them could do the job rather than have Ms Arroyo appoint someone in haste.

At a press conference, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said it would be "too late in the day" for the President to appoint a new commissioner.

Abalos pointed out that he and the five other commissioners already had specific assignments for the elections, and that appointing a seventh would not make too much of a difference.

"It's not that I would not want to share the authority of the commission with a certain person. But at this time, there's nothing that [a new commissioner] could do anymore," he said.

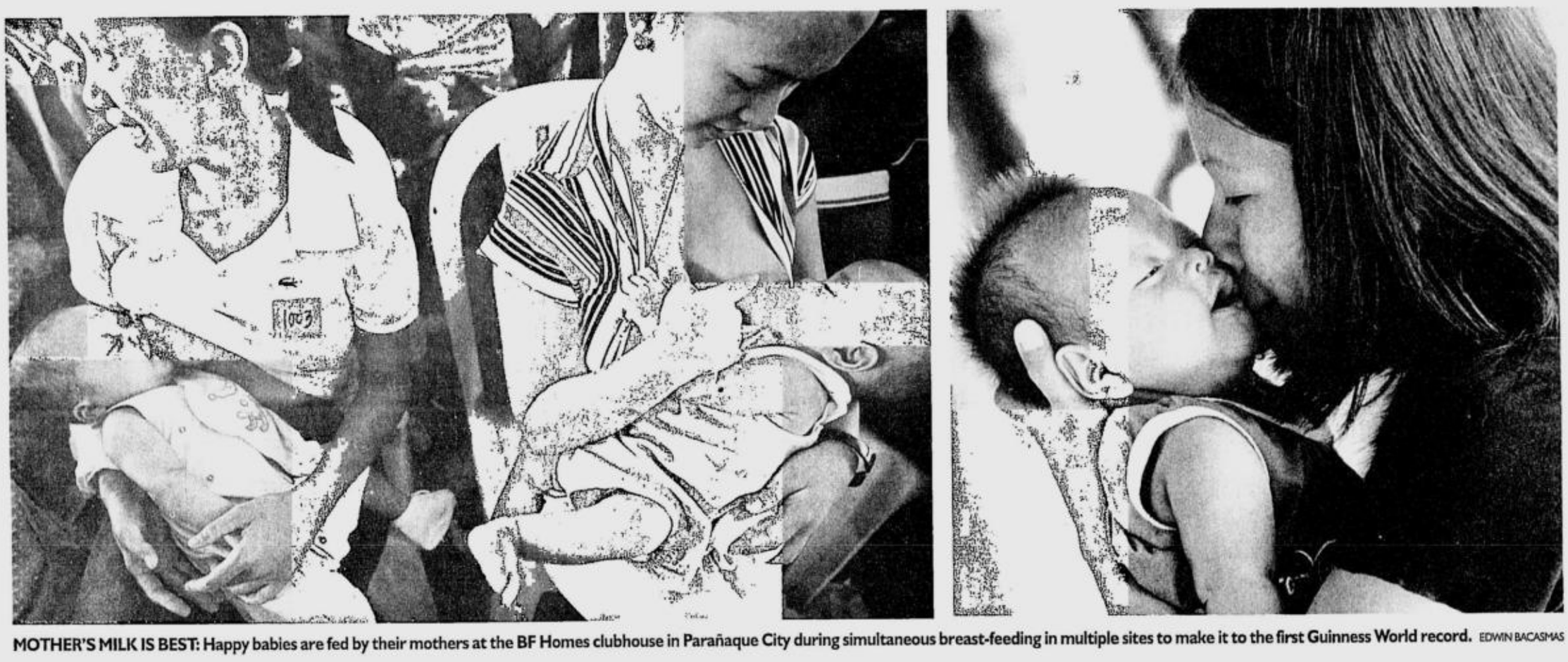
Salonga had said that the appointment of a commissioner "of moral integrity, competence, and impartiality" were among the "immediate steps" Malacañang should take to regain the people's trust and confidence.

'Seriously tainted'

He said Abalos and two other commissioners whom he did not name were "seriously tainted."

Earlier, Commissioners Resurreccion Borra and Rene Sarmiento raised the need to fill the vacancy in the Comelec to lighten the work load of the others.

But Borra had also said a new commissioner would need at least six months to be familiar with the poll body's judicial, quasi-judicial, and administrative duties. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Christine O. Avendano and Nikko Dizon*



MOTHER'S MILK IS BEST: Happy babies are fed by their mothers at the BF Homes clubhouse in Parañaque City during simultaneous breast-feeding in multiple sites to make it to the first Guinness World record. EDWIN BACASMAS

RP moms seek world record in breast-feeding

From page A1

hopes to set the first Guinness record for the biggest number of mothers breast-feeding in multiple locations.

Now on its second year, the event is also aimed at beating its record last year of 3,541 mothers breast-feeding in a single site—the San Andres Sports Complex and Civic Center in Malate, Manila.

Last year's event broke the previous record of 1,130 mothers breast-feeding simultaneously in Berkeley, California, in 2002.

At the BF Clubhouse in Parañaque City, the central site in Metro Manila yesterday, petite Jennifer, 22, made for an interesting sight as she nursed her twin sons one to a breast.

The 9-month-old boys—Mark Lester and Mark Lawrence—are exclusively breast-fed and are intolerant of milk formula, their mother said.

Agence France Presse reported that at least 3,869 mothers began feeding their babies at 10 a.m. in sites nationwide. The Associated Press reported that according to the organizers' website and DSWD official Felix Armenia, a partial, unofficial count showed at least 3,608 mothers took part.

Dr. Alma Ortillo Sotto, one of the organizers, said it would take at least three weeks to collate the final number of participants from 300 sites, concentrated in Manila, Las Piñas, Zamboanga, Sulu, La Union, Davao and other areas.

"But as of now, I can say that we have established the first Guinness world record for simultaneous breast-feeding in multiple sites," said Nona Andaya Castillo, director of Nurturers of the Earth.

P10,000 prize

At the BF Homes Clubhouse alone, more than 1,000 nursing babies lapsed into contented silence at the appointed time.

Jennifer, a resident of Barangay Moonwalk, was the only one who breast-fed twins.

"I always feed them at the same time. In a day, I breast-feed them at least four times," she said of her sons, who were dressed in identical white pajamas.

They usually took more than 30 minutes to nurse, Jennifer said.

"Mark Lester is more *matakaw* (the bigger feeder)," she shyly admitted, indicating the baby on her left breast.

Some of the mothers came with their babies on their own volition. But others were drawn to the P10,000 prize awaiting the oldest breast-feeding mother and child.

50 years old

In last year's event, Dr. Elvira Henares-Esguerra of the Children for Breastfeeding was adjudged the second oldest nursing mother.

Now 50, Esguerra was initially adjudged No. 1, at least in the Parañaque site.

"I'm so proud about being the oldest mom here. I don't even need a prize," she said with a chuckle when she learned that she was not eligible for the prize, being one of the organizers.

Her son, 5-year-old Larry, has been breast-fed since birth.

The organizers had thought that the Esguerras were the oldest nursing mother and child present. But Olivia de Leon, 35, rose from the audience and came forward with Jaica, her bright-eyed child of 6.

The De Leons won the title.

"I've been breast-feeding her since she was a baby," Olivia, a resident of Baclaran, said of Jaica. "Of course, it's hard to breast-feed her now because she's already big. Sometimes she just plays around because she has gotten used to it."

A mother can produce at least 20 cubic centimeters of breast milk for her child in more than a minute, said Sotto.

3 weeks old

In Pangasinan, 31 mothers and their babies from the capital town of Lingayen and nearby Binmaley took part in "Sabay-Sabay Sumususo sa Nanay."

A countdown by the government-run Radyo ng Bayan started the event organized by the Pangasinan Health Office (PHO).

The youngest baby at the Lingayen event was Jesselyn Ramos (born on April 8), and the oldest was Mariel Ramos (born on April 29, 2005).

The participating babies have all been breast-fed since birth, said PHO staff member Maricel Abulencia.

The many benefits of breast-feeding were discussed during the program, but its "slimming effect" was the most applauded by the mothers present.

Pangasinan health officer Dr. Jackson Soriano said his being breast-fed as a baby could be the reason he was very close to his mother.

For two years, breast-feeding protects mothers from ovarian cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and anemia, according to Soriano. It also protects mothers from unwanted pregnancy for six months after childbirth.

Soriano said many mothers were nursing their babies because of the prohibitive price of milk formula.

But he pointed out that breast-feeding was "the best thing" mothers could give their children.

Getting message across

"We need every possible way to get the message out that Filipino mothers should breast-feed exclusively for six months and then continue to breast-feed for two years and beyond with household foods," said Unicef spokesperson Dale Rutstein.

"Unfortunately, through advertising, most Filipino mothers now believe that artificial forms of foods for babies are actually better than breast milk," he said.

In February, Geneva-based UN food rights expert Jean Ziegler criticized milk companies and a Philippine pharmaceutical association for "deceptive and malicious" advertising practices aimed at selling infant formula in the country.

Ziegler said aggressive marketing practices by milk companies were misleading the public by claiming that breast-feeding could not be done by a majority of women and that their consumer products raised healthy, smart and happy babies.

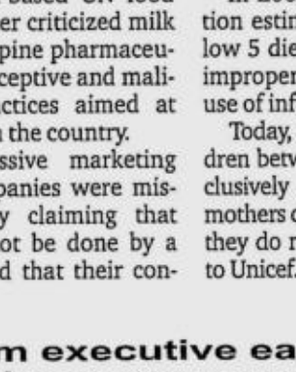
In 2003, the World Health Organization estimated that 16,000 children below 5 died in the Philippines because of improper feeding practices, including use of infant formula.

Today, only 16 percent of Filipino children between 4 and 5 months old are exclusively breast-fed and 13 percent of mothers do not breast-feed at all, believing they do not have enough milk, according to Unicef. *With reports from AP and AFP*

A Fil-Am executive earns top healthcare management credential in the US

CHICAGO, USA - **Andres D. Hortillosa, MBA, MS, FACHE, President, Entralink, Memphis, Tennessee** recently became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, the nation's leading professional society for healthcare leaders.

"Because healthcare management ultimately affects the people in our communities, it is critically important to have a standard of excellence promoted by a professional organization," says Thomas C. Dolan, PhD, FACHE, CAE, president and chief executive officer of ACHE. "By becoming an ACHE Fellow and simultaneously earning board certification from ACHE, healthcare leaders can show that they are committed to providing high-quality service to their patients and community."



Fellow status represents achievement of the highest standard of professional development. In fact, only 5,400 healthcare executives

Holds his distinction. To obtain Fellow status, candidates must fulfill multiple requirements, including passing a comprehensive examination, meeting academic and experiential criteria, earning continuing education credits and demonstrating professional/vcommunity involvement. Fellows are also committed to ongoing professional development and undergo recertification evert three years.

Hortillosa of Entralink USA, Memphis, Tennessee is privileged to use the FACHE credential, which signifies board certification in healthcare management and ACHE Fellow status. He earned his MBA degree in Healthcare Administration in May 2001 rom the University of Colorado, USA.

The American College of Healthcare Executives is an international professional society of more than 30,000 healthcare executives who lead the American hospitals, healthcare systems and other healthcare organizations. ACHE is known for its prestigious credentialing and educational programs and its annual Congress on Healthcare Leadership, which draws more than 4,000 participants each year. ACHE is also known for its journal, the *Journal of Healthcare Management*, and magazine, *Healthcare Executive*, as well as ground-breaking research and career development and public policy programs. ACHE's publishing division, Health Administration Press, is one of the largest publishers of books and journals on all aspects of health services management in addition to textbooks for use in college and university courses. Through such efforts, ACHE works toward its goal of being the premier professional society for healthcare leaders by providing exceptional value to its members.

For more information regarding the FACHE credential, please contact the ACHE Division of Membership at (001-312) 424-9400 or membership1@ache.org, or visit the Credentialing area of ache.org or contact Entralink Philippines at (02) 897-6987 or visit its Makati Office in 2/F ENZO Building, #399 Sen Gil Puyat (Buendia) Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.

ADVT

More Sports stories on A21 to 24

Late SPORTS

Kings sustain streak; Express score

GAMES TOMORROW (Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Purefoods
7:20 p.m.—Red Bull vs Talk 'N Text

By Musong R. Castillo

BARANGAY GINEBRA IS IN SUCH A roll that coach Jong Uichico has been grappling to come up with explanation why the Gin Kings keep on winning in the PBA Fiesta Cup despite the odds.

And they have not just been winning, but winning big.

The Kings broke out of the gates as hard as they could and tore Welcoat to shreds last night, 103-71, at the Araneta Coliseum to move closer to an automatic semifinal berth despite sporting a lineup severely depleted by injuries and commitment to the national cause.

Ginebra raised the longest winning streak of the tournament to five and improved to 9-2 overall, a full game up on second-running and defending champion Red Bull.

Welcoat, which paraded a new import in Wayland White, dropped out of the fight as early as the first period when it trailed, 36-15, and went on to take a fifth consecutive setback in a 2-9 overall card.

In the second game, Shawn Daniels had 18 points, 18 rebounds, six blocks and four steals as Air21 hammered out a tense 106-100 victory over Sta. Lucia to gain a share of second place at 8-3.

The Realtors dropped to 3-8 despite a 36-point debut by new import Jamaal Williams.

The best that Uichico could say about the Kings was that "we're playing as a team" and that the "schedule (of the games) has favored us well."

Johnny Abarrientos, Eric Menk, Rudy Hatfield and Rafi Reavis continued to sit it out for Ginebra because of different reasons, while Mark Caguioa and Jay-Jay Helterbrand are on loan to the national team.

Rod Nealy scored 31 of his 38 points in the first two periods before slowing down a little while the local Kings closed out the newcomer Dragons, who looked headed for elimination for the second straight tournament because of import woes.

White, the former University of New Mexico standout, was good for only 12 points in his debut. He also had just two rebounds in 36 minutes.

The scores:

First Game

BARANGAY GINEBRA 103—Nealy 38, Tubid 18, Chia 10, Seigle 9, Mamaril 7, Holper 4, Echavez 4, Salvacion 4, Macapagal 3, Hubalde 3, Santos 3.

WELCOAT 71—Reyes 20, White 12, Compton 12, Lopez 8, Ibañez 7, Wainwright 5, Gelig 4, Cabatu 3, Bagulon 0, Sta. Maria 0, Lao 0, Mente 0.

Quarters: 36-15, 58-35, 83-56, 103-71

Second Game

AIR21 106—David 22, Arboleda 21, Daniels 18, Telan 17, Canaleta 11, Dimaunahan 7, Santos 6, Se 2, Torion 2, Andaya 0, Bernardo 0.

STA. LUCIA 100—J. Williams 36, K. Williams 20, Aquino 16, Mendoza 13, Omolon 8, Isip 3, Miranda 2, Ramos 2, Magsumbol 0, Bughao 0, Santos 0, Gonzales 0.

Quarters: 18-23, 44-55, 78-77, 106-100

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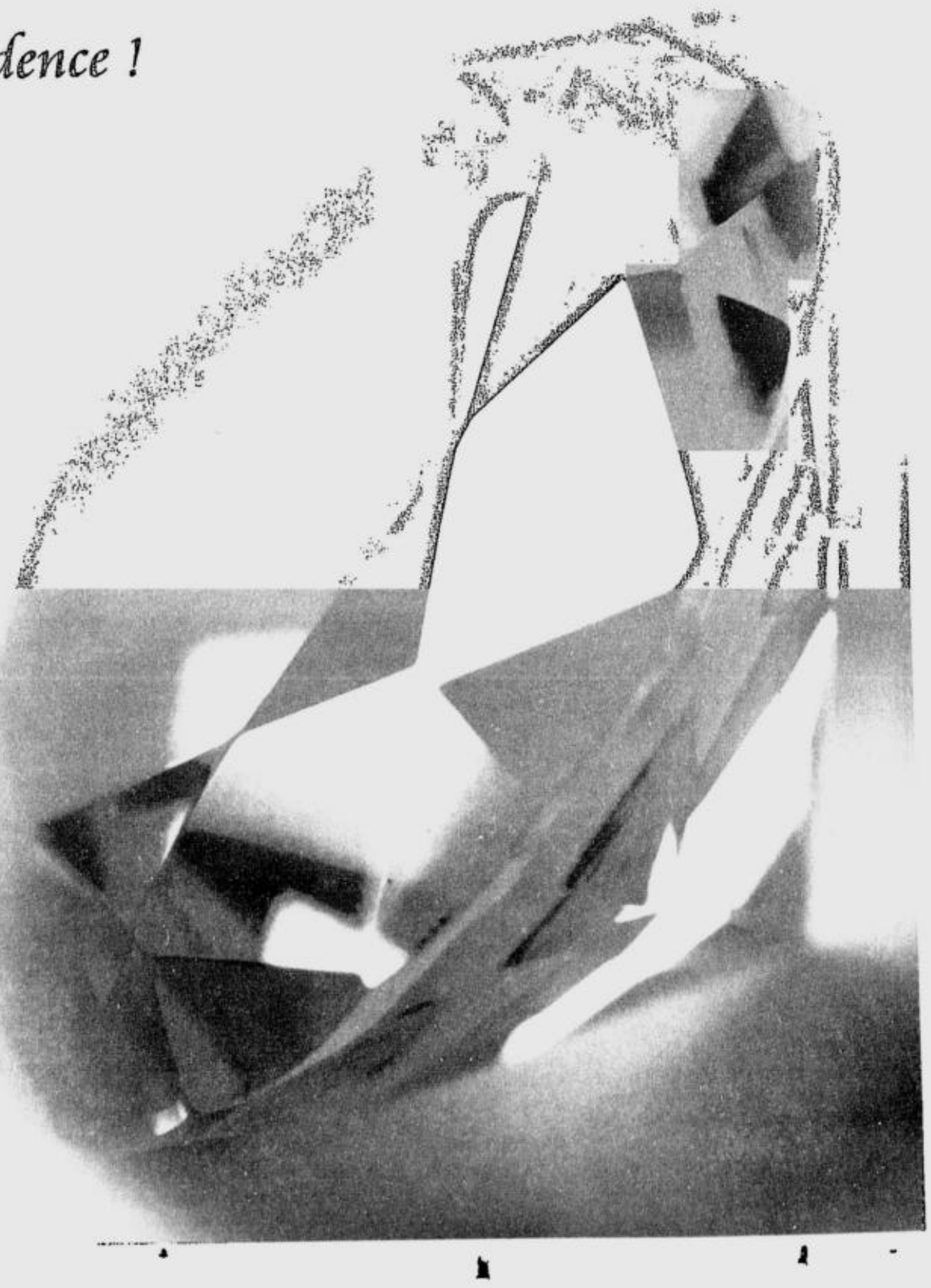

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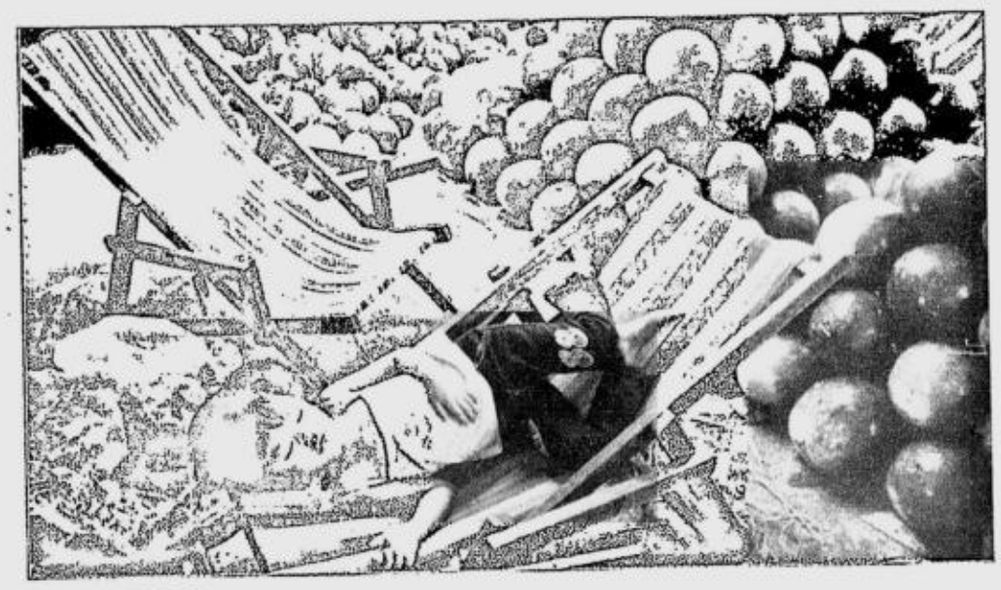
BIR orders freeze on Makati gov't assets

Binay personal funds included; mayor sees Palace hand in move



NAP BREAK
A girl watching over her family's watermelon stall in a Quezon City market takes a break on a sizzling afternoon. REUTERS

By DJ Yap

THIS TIME, THE TAXMAN COMETH AFTER THE CITY Hall of Makati and Mayor Jejomar Binay.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue yesterday ordered more than 30 major banks to freeze the assets of the city government, including Binay's personal funds, in what it said was a move to recover P1.1 billion in alleged unpaid taxes.

The agency served notices of garnishment to 34 banks in Makati and neighboring cities, where the local government's funds are deposited, BIR revenue officer Roberto Baquiran said.

The service of a notice of garnishment means the banks are ordered to withhold payment of cash to Makati City, and seize its properties in favor of the BIR.

At a press briefing yesterday at the BIR North Makati office, Baquiran said the agency would also go after Binay's personal accounts, since the liabilities of the city government is "joint" with its chief executive.

"We will go to court if we have to," Binay said. "Our records show the city government has no obligations with the national government.

"But as expected, the Arroyo administration is misusing the powers of government for its political ends," he said shortly after the BIR made the announcement.

Binay, also president of the United Opposition, also accused Malacañang of exerting "pressure" on officials of the BIR, a charge Baquiran denied.

The BIR case stemmed from the city government's alleged failure to remit a total of P1,150,331,321.81 in withholding taxes of about 8,000 employees from 1999 to 2002, Baquiran said.

"We really have no choice but to go after Makati City properties if Mayor Binay fails to settle the amount," Baquiran said.

He said Binay could face criminal prosecution and up to six years in prison because of violations of the tax code, a charge Binay said he found laughable.

"What law did he base that on? Assuming but not admitting that we are in the wrong, it's obvious that there is no criminal intent here," he said.

Binay said he was optimistic that Finance Secretary Margarito Teves

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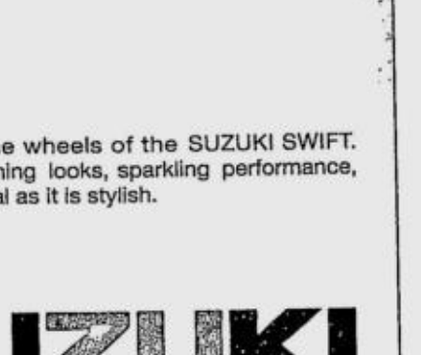

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OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, May 5, 2007

LRTA warns commuters: No bomb jokes, or else ...

By Riza T. Olchondra

FOLLOWING AN AIRPORT POLICY, passengers making jokes about having a bomb in their possession run the risk of facing charges, the Light Rail Transit Authority warned yesterday.

The LRTA, which manages Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2, issued the warning after three women were apprehended in separate incidents on Monday, May 1, for creating panic among passengers.

"We would like to ask the public not to make any bomb jokes at all LRT lines because it is a very sensitive issue. A bomb scare joke is no laughing matter. If you want to have fun, try not to do it at the expense and risk of hurting other people" LRTA Administrator Mel Robles said.

He added that they will not hesitate to file a case against individuals who put the lives of LRT passengers in danger.

One of three women apprehended was identified as Noraina Langco, a native of Marawi City.

She was taken into custody after she told a security guard at the LRT Line 1 Baclaran station that there was a bomb in her bag.

Langco was taken into custody and charged with making a false bomb threat in violation of Presidential Decree No. 1727. An additional charge of unjust vexation was also filed against her for making a rude gesture at the guards who were investigating her. She was later released after posting a bail of P12,000.

The two other women apprehended were students of the Philippine School of Business Administration who joked about having a bomb while their bags were being inspected at the LRT Line 2 Katipunan station.

They were taken for questioning by security guards, but the LRTA did not file charges of alarm and scandal against them because both were minors. The students were released to their parents, with a warning against making similar jokes in the future.

The LRTA, meanwhile, filed a case against two Germans who kicked a female guard after she refused to let them into the station because they were allegedly drunk. Helmut Scheithauer, 53, and Karl Heinz Merz, 55, were later released on bail.

DID YOU KNOW

BEFORE it was renamed Chino Roces Bridge after the late publisher, the historic bridge near Malacañang Palace in Manila was named in honor of educator Enrique Mendiola, one of the first Filipinos appointed to the Board of Regents of the University of the Philippines. He was born on May 3, 1859 and died on March 30, 1914.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

SAN JUAN'S favorite son, former President Estrada with sons Jinggoy (left) and JV Ejercito. INQUIRER PHOTO

San Juan still Estrada turf

By Kristine L. Alave

ELEKSYON 2007

THE TOWN OF SAN JUAN HAS long been known as Estrada country, with many residents who remain fiercely loyal to their favorite son, former President "Erap" Estrada, and his family.

In front of the municipal hall, banners welcome Estrada who recently celebrated his 70th birthday. Inside, there is a picture of San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito with Estrada's (his father) photograph, behind him. In other city halls around the country, the dominant picture would normally show the local chief executive with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The residents' unwavering support for Estrada and his family—despite his ouster from the presidency in 2001—can be attributed to the fact that he served as San Juan mayor for 19 years. The mayoral seat later became his launching pad for his entry into national politics. After serving as senator for several years, he was elected vice president in 1992 and became the country's 13th president in 1998.

After Estrada, there was a three-year break when the mayoral seat was held by an "outsider," Rodolfo Domingo. In the early 90s, Estrada's son, Jinggoy, became mayor for three consecutive terms. He was succeeded by his half-brother, JV, Estrada's son by Guia Gomez. JV is now running for his third term in office.

Both sons have followed their father's footsteps. Jinggoy parlayed his popularity as a movie star and mayoral experience to become a senator. Ejercito initially wanted to run for the Senate in the upcoming May 14 elections but was prevailed upon by his father to stay in San Juan.

Had he left local politics, it was reported that the mayoral post would be contested by his mother and Jinggoy's wife, Precy. This year, Grace Singson, a longtime resident, is running against Ejercito as an independent.

The Estradas have been in the mayor's seat for over three decades now. Do the people of San Juan think it's time for a change?

Not many people think so. Municipal administrator Ranulfo Dacalos said the people's admiration for the Estradas, particularly Erap, has not waned.

When people voted for Erap's sons, they were actually voting for him, he said.

"San Juan has always been Estrada country," he said, noting that the popularity of the family comes from the patriarch. "It has always been the father, not the siblings," Dacalos said.

Roland Astillero, a vendor and San Juan resident since birth, said Erap was their best mayor. "He was really the one who developed San Juan," he said, adding that the people loved him for his "*masa*" (common folk) appeal.

Asked if San Juan's modernization was inevitable—with or without an Estrada at the helm—Dacalos said this would be hard to imagine.

Domingo Joaquin, a businessman, said he has lived in San Juan since 1984 and cannot wait for the time when the Estradas leave city hall.

"I am just fed up," Joaquin said in Filipino. "I have been living here and my wife grew up here, nothing has happened," he added.

The infrastructure has been there long before the Estradas came and the pockets of urban development were centered on estates where the family has interests, he pointed out. Most of the Estradas' energy and resources, he added, were channeled to strengthening their urban poor base.

He said Ejercito would likely win the election.

Was he heartened by the idea that this is Ejercito's last term? Joaquin heaved a sigh. "We have news that Guia (JV's mother) or Precy (Jinggoy's wife) would run for mayor next time," he said.

Party-list youth nabbed for maul case

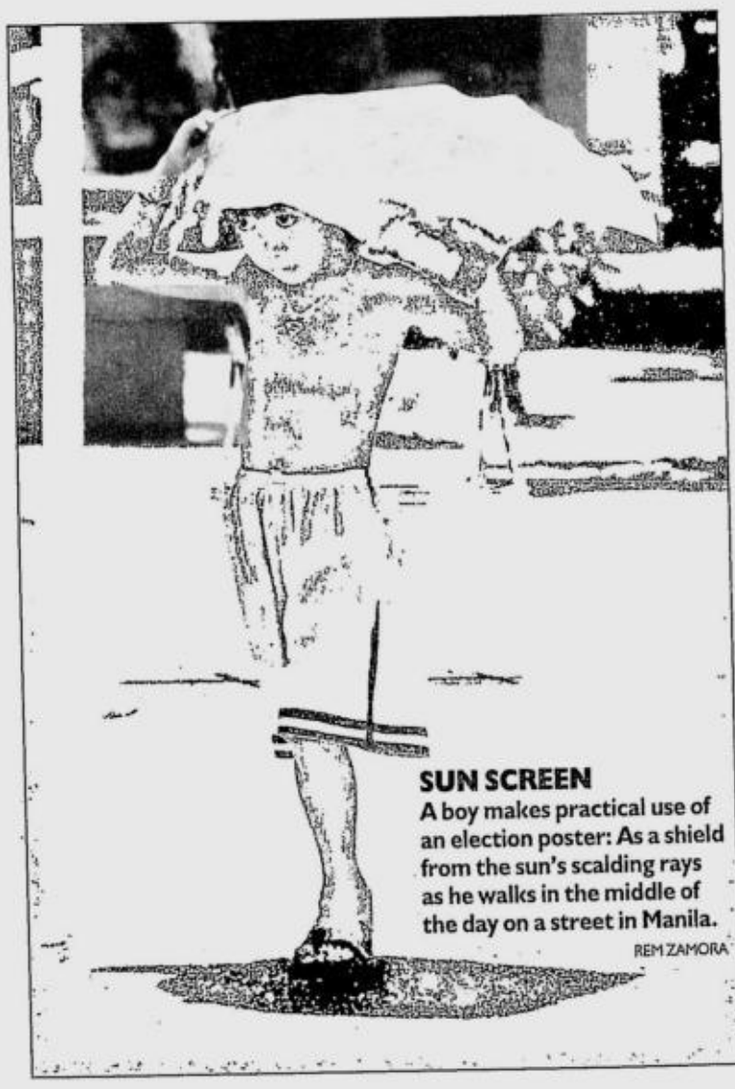
A MEMBER OF A YOUTH PARTY-list group running in the May 14 elections was arrested Tuesday night for allegedly mauling a police officer during a rally held at Liwasang Bonifacio to mark Labor Day.

Kenn Ambay, 21, coordinator of the Kabataan party-list group, said he was on his way home after the rally when four men arrested him on P. Campa Street, Morayta, at around 8 p.m. The four men, according to him, were members of the Philippine National Police Special Action Force. Three of them were in plainclothes while only one was in uniform, he added.

Ambay said he was taken to the Manila Police District where one of those who arrested him, PO1 Christopher Amistoso, claimed that the party-list coordinator was among several men who had ganged up on him and another SAF member, PO2 Raul Gumiran, earlier at the rally.

Amistoso said he was able to escape, but added Gumiran was mauled by the group.

Ambay, meanwhile, denied he was part of the group which beat up the policeman. He remained in detention at the police station at press time. *Cyrian S. Agujo and Aaron del Rosario*



SUN SCREEN
A boy makes practical use of an election poster: As a shield from the sun's scalding rays as he walks in the middle of the day on a street in Manila.
REM ZAMORA

Mayoral bet loses car to thief

By Allison W. Lopez

A SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLE owned by a congressional candidate in Manila was stolen early morning yesterday in front of his house in Tondo.

Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines who is running for congressman in the city's first district, went to the police station to report the loss of his blue Nissan Safari with plate number UJJ 163 at 6:55 a.m. The van was parked in front of Lopez's house on N. Zamora Street when it was stolen.

A pedicab driver told Lopez he saw a man at least 5'9" tall and between 40 and 43 years old boarding the vehicle at around 3:15 a.m. yesterday, he added. Election campaign materials and important documents were inside the vehicle, police said.

Lopez, son of former Manila Mayor Gemillano "Mel" Lopez, is running under the ticket of Sen. Alfredo Lim, who is contesting the mayoral seat.

Leviste employees told to show up before DOJ

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE has ordered 11 employees of former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste to appear before the agency after they allegedly refused to cooperate with the National Bureau of Investigation in connection with the murder case filed against their employer.

The NBI last month filed a complaint of obstruction of justice against the 11 after they refused to be interviewed regarding the killing of Leviste's longtime aide, Rafael de las Alas, according to Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco.

The 11 were identified as Levie Panganiban, Remedios Patigas, Elsa Barredo, Prescilla Abinal, Cecille Tumamak, Alejo Damayan, Cherie Yuson, Marietta Mongcog, Salvador Capitin, Catalino Agojo and Lorenzon Ubungen-Nisperos Jr.

They were ordered to present themselves to the DOJ on May 9 and to submit their answer to the NBI complaint.

"You are hereby warned that failure on your part to comply with this subpoena shall be considered as a waiver on your part. Therefore, this case shall be deemed submitted for resolution," Velasco said in his subpoena.

Velasco said the 11 employees were first summoned by the NBI to be interviewed as witnesses in connection with the ongoing DOJ investigating the Leviste murder case.

According to him, the 11 did not show up and instead sent a lawyer. He said the employees invoked their right to remain silent through their lawyer, prompting the NBI to file the complaint against them.

"The NBI filed the case because they could only invoke their right to remain silent if they are the respondents or the accused. But it said they were just invited to shed light on the incident," Velasco said.

He said the 11 employees were summoned by the NBI because their names appeared in the logbook of the LPL Tower on Jan. 12, the day De las Alas was killed.

Leviste had admitted that he shot his longtime aide in self-defense inside his office at the LPL Towers. A charge of homicide was subsequently filed against him but it was upgraded to murder based on the DOJ's subsequent findings.

The Makati court hearing the case against Leviste is set to resolve whether or not to grant his petition to be allowed to post bail.

METROBRIEFS

Rivals face polls case

POLITICAL tension further escalated in Makati City after disqualification charges were filed yesterday against three rival politicians, including Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay and his daughter Abigail, who is running for Congress. Claiming to be concerned residents of the city, three people filed separate complaints against the Binays as well as against congressional candidate Erwin Genuino, who is running against Abigail. Commission on Elections National Capital Region Director Michael Dioneda said Genuino is facing a disqualification case for his allegedly oversized posters and alleged vote-buying. Abigail is facing a disqualification case for allegedly using government cars during her campaign. A disqualification case was also filed against the Makati mayor for allegedly harassing residents pasting Genuino posters in their houses.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Countersuit

LAWYERS of hostage takers Armando "Jun" Ducat Jr. and Caezar Augustus Carbonell are set to file harassment charges against the Manila Social Welfare department for filing child abuse cases against them "without basis." Ducat and Carbonnel face 26 counts of child abuse for taking 26 children hostage.

Aaron del Rosario

BIR orders freeze ...

From page A17

himself would lift the garnishment, which he said would not cripple operations of the city government.

He said he met Teves in December last year and the official agreed to set a second meeting to finalize the settlement.

"All these things are still being talked about, so I don't understand why Baquiran is so quick to sign the garnishment notice," he said.

The mayor added that he had even talked yesterday morning to BIR Makati Regional Director Nelson Aspe. Binay said Aspe was surprised why it was Baquiran who signed the notices when this was his (Aspe's) responsibility.

Baquiran said the orders to serve the notice of garnishment came from the national office, adding that he never felt any pressure from his superiors.

In June 2006, Binay offered to settle the liabilities through a P200 million settlement after meeting with BIR Commissioner Jose Buñag, Baquiran said.

But in a letter last November the BIR told Binay the settlement was not acceptable.

My fearless forecast

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

HERE IS MY FEARLESS FORECAST a little less than two weeks before the May 14 election:

• Sen. Lito Lapid, who was elected to his current post and, before that, Pampanga governor based on his popularity, will meet his political Waterloo in Makati where he's running against the incumbent, Mayor Jejomar Binay.

I have no love lost for Binay, who has been accused of massive corruption (which politician is clean and honest, anyway?), but from what I've gathered from residents, he's a modern-day Robin Hood. He has done for Makati what his predecessors—including the much-loved, albeit controversial Nemesio Yabut—had not done: Take care of the needs of the poor and elderly residents.

• Board Member Lilia "Baby" Pineda will win by a mile in the Pampanga gubernatorial race against the incumbent Gov. Mark Lapid, the senator's son, and Catholic priest Eddie Panlilio.

There's been a lot of hype about Panlilio getting the support of the middle class, the rich and the intellectuals in the province. But do these sectors comprise the majority?

Pineda, married to alleged "jueteng" lord Bong Pineda, is known for her charitable work even before she ran for office a couple of years ago. She's the first to lend a helping hand to calamity victims who are not even her constituents, like when she organized a 30-truck convoy to typhoon-ravaged Bicol a few months ago.

Panlilio's fellow priests are, of course, secretly supporting the woman candidate. Why? Because when they need help in their parishes, they run to her or her husband Bong.

The poor and the unlettered, who comprise the majority of voters in Pampanga and who supported Lito and Mark Lapid, love Pineda.

• Retired two-star police general Eduardo Matillano will not win against incumbent Edward Hagedorn, who's leading in his opponent by a mile in the surveys in the Puerto Princesa mayoralty race.

Like Pineda and Binay, Hagedorn is also a Robin Hood in Puerto Princesa.

• Even if Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte had an opponent—he's practically running unopposed—he would win by a landslide over his strong rival.

Duterte, whose alleged brand of governance is comparable to the mythical movie character "Dirty Harry," is also loved by his constituents for bringing peace and order to their city.

Davao City residents don't care about alleged human rights violations attributed to Duterte in dealing with notorious criminals like rapists, robbers and drug pushers.

* * *

Banana king Antonio Floirendo Sr. is supporting the rival of his brother-in-law, Rodolfo del Rosario, for the Davao del Norte gubernatorial race, the incumbent Gov. Yayong Gementiza.

Sources close to the Floirendo family said they consider Del Rosario an "ingrate."

Floirendo Sr. gave Del Rosario the management of the Tadeco banana plantation and supported his candidacy for governor the first time.

The old man wanted his son, Antonio Jr. or "Tonyboy," to run but Del Rosario opposed it and instead said he would join the race.

In order not to divide the family, Tonyboy withdrew his candidacy in favor of his uncle, the sources said.

But now, it seems all the resources of the Floirendo family, which include the billion-peso banana plantation, will be brought to bear against Del Rosario, a former governor. My sources said Gementiza would not have run had Tonyboy thrown his hat in the gubernatorial contest.

SHOWDOWN WITH CONGRESS

Bush vetoes troop withdrawal measure

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush on Tuesday night vetoed legislation to pull US troops out of Iraq in a historic showdown with Congress over whether the unpopular and costly war should end or escalate.

It was a day of high political drama, falling on the fourth anniversary of Bush's "Mission Accomplished" speech declaring that major combat operations had ended in Iraq.

In only the second veto of his presidency, Bush rejected legislation pushed by Democratic leaders that would require the first US combat troops to be withdrawn by Oct. 1 with a goal of a complete pullout six months later.

"This is a prescription for chaos and confusion and we must not impose it on our troops," Bush said in a nationally broadcast statement from the White House. He said the bill would "mandate a rigid and artificial deadline" for troop pullouts, and "it makes no sense to tell the enemy when you plan to start withdrawing."

Democrats accused Bush of ignoring Americans' desire to stop the war, which has claimed the lives of more than 3,350 members of the military.

"The president wants a blank check," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, moments after Bush's appearance. "The Congress is not going to give it to him." She said lawmakers would work with him to find common ground but added that there was "great distance" between them on Iraq.

The legislation amounted to a rare rebuke of a wartime president and an assertion by Democrats that Congress must play a major role in Iraq and the extent of US involvement.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said Bush had an obligation to explain his plan for responsibly ending the war.

"If the president thinks by vetoing this bill, he'll stop us from working to change the direction of the war in Iraq, he is mistaken," Reid said.

Lacking the votes to override the president, Democrats have already signaled they intend to approve a replacement bill stripped of the troop withdrawal timetable. Determined to challenge Bush's policy, they are turning their attention to setting goals for the Iraqi government to meet as it struggles to establish a more secure, democratic society.

The White House and congressional Republicans have also called for so-called benchmarks, but only if they don't mandate a troop withdrawal or some other major change in war policy.

Bush will meet with congressional leaders—Democrats and Republicans alike—on Wednesday to discuss new legislation.

He said Democrats had made a political statement by passing antiwar legislation.

"They've sent their message, and now it's time to put politics behind us and support our troops with the funds," he said. *AP*

Democrat candidates call for new leadership

WASHINGTON—DEMOCRATIC presidential candidates made a point of reminding voters that Tuesday was the fourth anniversary of President George W. Bush's speech declaring an end to major combat in Iraq.

"One of the most shameful episodes in American history," Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign website read in bold type below a photo of Bush standing on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln in front of a sign that read "Mission Accomplished."

"Never before has a president pulled a political stunt when so many American lives were and remain in harm's way," the New York senator and former first lady said in a statement. She said the war "will stand as one of the darkest blots on leadership we've ever had in our nation's history."

Clinton and her rivals for the party's presidential nomination seized on the image to promote new leadership in Iraq.

All the Democratic candidates say the war must end and say they would redeploy troops out of Iraq if they were in the White House, while all the leading Republican candidates are backing Bush's troop increase to try to stabilize the country.

White House spokesperson Dana Perino said the president was aware of the anniversary, although he did not mention it during a meeting in Florida with military commanders. She said the president had since acknowledged mistakes in Iraq, but Tuesday was a day to thank the commanders for the successes and talk about his new strategy for the war.

Sen. Barack Obama said the anniversary was a day to grieve for the fallen soldiers and urge the president to bring troops home. *AP*

SKULL AND CROSSBONES
An Iraqi soldier walks past graffiti of a skull and crossbones left behind by US troops in the city of Mosul, 360 km northwest of Baghdad, on May 2. AP

'Coalition didn't plan for war's aftermath'

LONDON—BRITAIN'S DEFENSE secretary during the Iraq war says the coalition failed to plan properly for the aftermath and British officials underestimated the influence of US Vice President Dick Cheney, a newspaper reported on Wednesday.

But Geoff Hoon, who was defense secretary in Prime Minister Tony Blair's government from 1999 until 2005, said intelligence officials had believed that Saddam Hussein was amassing weapons of mass destruction and that the allies did not lie about why they went to war.

In an interview with The Guardian newspaper, Hoon said that "we didn't plan for the right sort of aftermath."

"Maybe we were too optimistic about the idea of the streets being lined with cheering people. Although I have reconciled it in my own mind, we perhaps didn't do enough to see it through the Sunni perspective. Perhaps we should have done more to understand their position," Hoon was quoted as saying.

Hoon said the British side had not comprehended Cheney's influence in the US administration.

Even when Blair and US President George W. Bush had agreed on some matter, "sometimes ... the decision actually came out of a completely different place."

"And you think: what did we miss? I think we missed Cheney," Hoon was quoted as saying.

He did not cite any examples of decisions apparently reversed by Cheney.

Hoon, who is now minister for Europe in the Foreign Office, said Britain had opposed the wholesale dismissal of Iraq's army and police forces.

"We certainly argued against," Hoon was quoted as saying. *AP*

Experts see rice as culprit in global warming

BANGKOK—AS DELEGATES TO a climate conference in the Thai capital debate how to reduce greenhouse gases, one of the problems—and a possible solution—lies in the rice fields that cover much of Thailand, the rest of Asia and beyond.

Methane emissions from flooded rice paddies contribute to global warming just as coal-fired power plants, automobile exhausts and other sources do with the carbon dioxide they spew into the atmosphere.

In fact, the report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change meeting this week in Bangkok concludes that rice production was a main cause of rising methane emissions in the 20th century. It calls for better controls.

"There is no other crop that is emitting such a large amount of greenhouse gases," said Reiner Wassmann, a climate change specialist at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines.

"Methane emissions are unique to rice," he said. "If Asian countries are exploring possibilities to reduce greenhouse gas, they have to look at rice production. I'm not saying it's the biggest source, but in Asia it's a source that cannot be neglected."

It's the bacteria that thrive in flooded paddies that produce methane, by decomposing manure used as fertilizer and other organic matter in the oxygen-free environment. The gas is emitted through the plants or directly into the atmosphere.

A molecule of methane is 21 times more potent than a molecule of carbon dioxide as a heat-trapping gas. Although carbon dioxide is still the bigger problem, representing 70 percent of the warming potential in the atmosphere, rising levels of methane now account for 23 percent, reports the US Environmental Protection Agency.

After decades of atmospheric buildup, methane—also emitted naturally from wetlands and from other manmade sources, such as landfills and cattle farming—has leveled off in the past few years. Some scientists credit changes in rice production, and some also trace it to repairs in oil and gas storage facilities that can leak methane.

A 2005 study by US scientists focused on China, which produces a third of the world's rice and where rice fields have shrunk by 10 million hectares in the past decade as farmers shifted to other crops and abandoned marginal land. The study also found that nitrogen-based fertilizer has replaced manure, and many Chinese farmers are using less water on their fields.

For Asians, modifying rice production might prove easier and cheaper than some of the other fixes proposed in the IPCC draft report, such as switching from coal to solar, wind power or other renewable energy sources. *AP*

Terrier saves children from pitbull attack

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND—A plucky foot-high Jack Russell terrier named George saved five New Zealand children from two marauding pitbulls, but was so severely mauled in the fight he had to be destroyed, his owner said on Wednesday.

George was playing with the group of children as they returned home from buying sweets at a neighborhood shop in the small North Island town of Manaia last Sunday when the two pitbulls appeared and lunged toward them, his owner Allan Gay said.

"George was brave—he took them on and he's not even a foot high," Gay told The Associated Press. "He jumped in on them, he tried to keep them off.

"If it wasn't for George, those kids would have copped it."

One of the children, Richard Rosewarne, 11, was quoted in the Taranaki Daily News on Wednesday as saying George fought with the pitbulls to keep them off his 4-year-old brother, Darryl.

"George tried to protect us by barking and rushing at them, but they started to bite him—one on the head and the other on the back," Rosewarne said. "We ran off crying and some people saw what was happening and rescued George."

But George, aged 9, was so badly mauled that a veterinarian had to put him down, Gay said.

"The two pitbulls ripped the skin from his throat and chest and down his back," he said, adding the tough little terrier also "had a bad heart condition."

Gay said the pitbulls' owner had surrendered the pair to dog control officers, and demanded they be destroyed, claiming they had launched unprovoked attacks previously.

South Taranaki District Council official Graham Young said the two dogs had been impounded, and likely would be destroyed because of the attack. *AP*

BICYCLE-RIDING BEAR
An animal trainer helps a bear as it rides bicycle during a show at the Shanghai Wild Animal Park on May 2. REUTERS

Longer jail terms for flashers eyed

NEW YORK—FLASHERS BEWARE: CITY OFficials want to increase the punishment for people who expose themselves on the streets and subways of New York.

On Monday, a City Council committee heard testimony on legislation that would change the classification of public lewdness from a class B misdemeanor to an A class. The change raises the possible fine for each offense from $500 to $1,000 and increases the maximum jail time from 90 days to one year.

Flashing and groping have long been a problem in New York City, especially on subway cars and platforms. Last year, the New York Police Department launched "Operation Exposure" to catch flashers in the act by sending undercover officers into the transit system.

The sting operation was conducted five separate times, resulting in 29 arrests. And in total for 2006, there were 556 arrests for public lewdness, up from 408 the previous year. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

World Bank decision on Wolfowitz out soon

WASHINGTON—The World Bank's board expressed fresh concern on Tuesday over bank president Paul Wolfowitz's handling of a hefty pay package for his girlfriend and promised a decision soon in a controversy that has led to calls for his resignation. The 24-member board met several hours with a special bank panel that over the past two days had heard from Wolfowitz, his girlfriend and bank employee Shaha Riza and other present and former bank officials about Riza's promotion and pay raise to $193,590. In a statement afterward, the directors said they "remain very concerned about the impact on the work of the bank group and are committed to the earliest possible resolution of the matter." *AP*

Fewer immigrants take to the streets

LOS ANGELES—Immigration rallies held across the United States produced a fraction of the million-plus protesters who turned out last year, as fear about raids and frustration that the marches have not pushed Congress to pass reform kept many at home. In Los Angeles, where several hundred thousand turned out last year, about 25,000 attended the first of two scheduled rallies on Tuesday. In Chicago, where more than 400,000 swarmed the streets a year earlier, police officials put initial estimates at about 150,000. Protests were largely peaceful except for an evening rally at a park in Los Angeles, where several people suspected of throwing rocks and bottles at police were arrested. *AP*

Another 'bandit queen' runs for office

BHADOI, INDIA—Seema Parihar was once one of northern India's most feared bandits. Now she wants to be a member of Parliament. Parihar, who faces charges on 29 counts of murder and kidnapping, is running in a May 3 by-election to represent the Bhadoi district in for India's Lok Sabha, or lower house of Parliament. And she has a precedent for such a transformation. India's famous "Bandit Queen," Phoolan Devi, became a member of Parliament in 1996 after a long career roaming central India's desolate valleys, allegedly stealing from and killing wealthy, upper-caste landowners who she said exploited poor, landless farmers. Devi was murdered, while still serving as a lawmaker in 2001, by one of the upper-caste Hindus she had fought against. *AP*

'Courteous bandit' draws sympathy

DETROIT—A 61-year-old homeless bank robber who told police he wanted to be arrested so he could have food and shelter inspired his prosecutor to make the rare move of asking for leniency. Calling bank robber Lawrence Lawson a "courteous bandit," Prosecutor David Gorcyca said he was caught up in Michigan's "devastating economic climate" and asked the public for help in finding Lawson a job. "His intention was to get caught," Gorcyca said after Tuesday's sentencing. "He did not want to be homeless." Lawson pleaded guilty April 10 to one count of bank robbery. The judge sentenced him to a year in jail with credit for 291 days served. Lawson will be eligible for release on May 13. *AP*

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Olmert won't resign despite party mutiny

JERUSALEM—ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT REmained defiant on Wednesday in the face of a mutiny by his party, which joined calls for him to quit in the wake of a damning report of his leadership in the Lebanon war.

"To all those who are in haste in order to take advantage of the report for political profit, I tell them not to be hasty," Olmert said at the opening of an extraordinary Cabinet meeting.

He spoke after an aide to Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni—a top Kadima official considered one of the front-runners to take over party leadership—said that she would ask Olmert to quit during a meeting later in the day.

"She is expected to ask him to resign," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Should she issue the call, Livni would become the most senior member in Olmert's ruling coalition and within his party to join those clamoring for the premier to step down in the wake of the critical war report.

Olmert admitted that "there is no doubt that the report points at some extremely serious failures in the government's conduct and naturally first and foremost of me."

But he has thus far refused to bow to the ever-increasing pressure to step down. His Kadima party cannot forcibly oust him from his post, as the party's charter does not spell out such a procedure.

Hours before the Cabinet meeting, the head of Kadima's parliamentary bloc called on Olmert to step down, saying it would be "suicidal" for the centrist party, formed a year and a half ago, if the premier remained.

"He must take the decision to resign so that Kadima can continue with his mandate," Avigdor Itzchaky told public radio.

Two of Kadima's 29 deputies in the 120-seat parliament on Tuesday openly called on him to resign and a senior party official said that a majority of Kadima MPs wanted him to quit.

Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz of Kadima said he would call during Wednesday's Cabinet meeting "for the creation of a broad unity government with a deep sense of responsibility."

Polls published on Wednesday showed that between 65 and 68 percent of Israelis wanted Olmert to quit, and only 6 percent thought he was capable of carrying out the functions of his office.

With the opposition and the press howling for Olmert's head, the rebellion within his party further upped the enormous public pressure for the 61-year-old premier to stand down less than a year after officially assuming office.

That pressure is likely to increase further on Thursday, when parliament holds an extraordinary session to discuss the report and a mass rally is due to take place in Tel Aviv to call on Olmert to resign.

Monday's partial report accused Olmert of "serious failure in exercising judgment, responsibility and prudence," of acting "hastily" and personally contributing to "over-ambitious" and unfeasible war aims during the 34-day conflict against Hezbollah last summer.

Speaking hours after the report was made public, Olmert told the nation that it would be "incorrect" for him to step down.

But he vowed that his government, already reeling from a string of sex and graft scandals, would focus quickly on correcting mistakes exposed by the inquiry.

Despite the pressure, some pundits warn that Israel's master politician could yet ride out the storm as most of the members in his 78-strong coalition opposed early elections—which polls show the right-wing opposition Likud party would likely win.

Israel launched the war on Hezbollah after the Shiite militia seized two soldiers in a deadly cross-border raid last July 12. The war killed more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and more than 160 Israelis, most of them soldiers, according to government figures.

It is widely regarded as a failure because it did not achieve its two main objectives—freeing the two captured servicemen and stopping Hezbollah rocket fire. *AFP*

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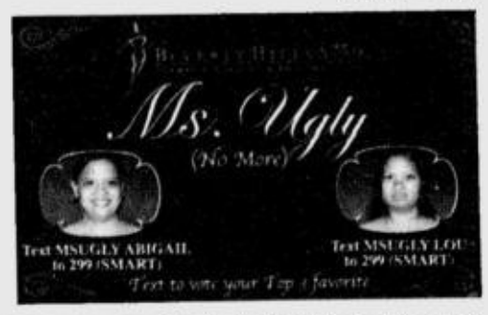
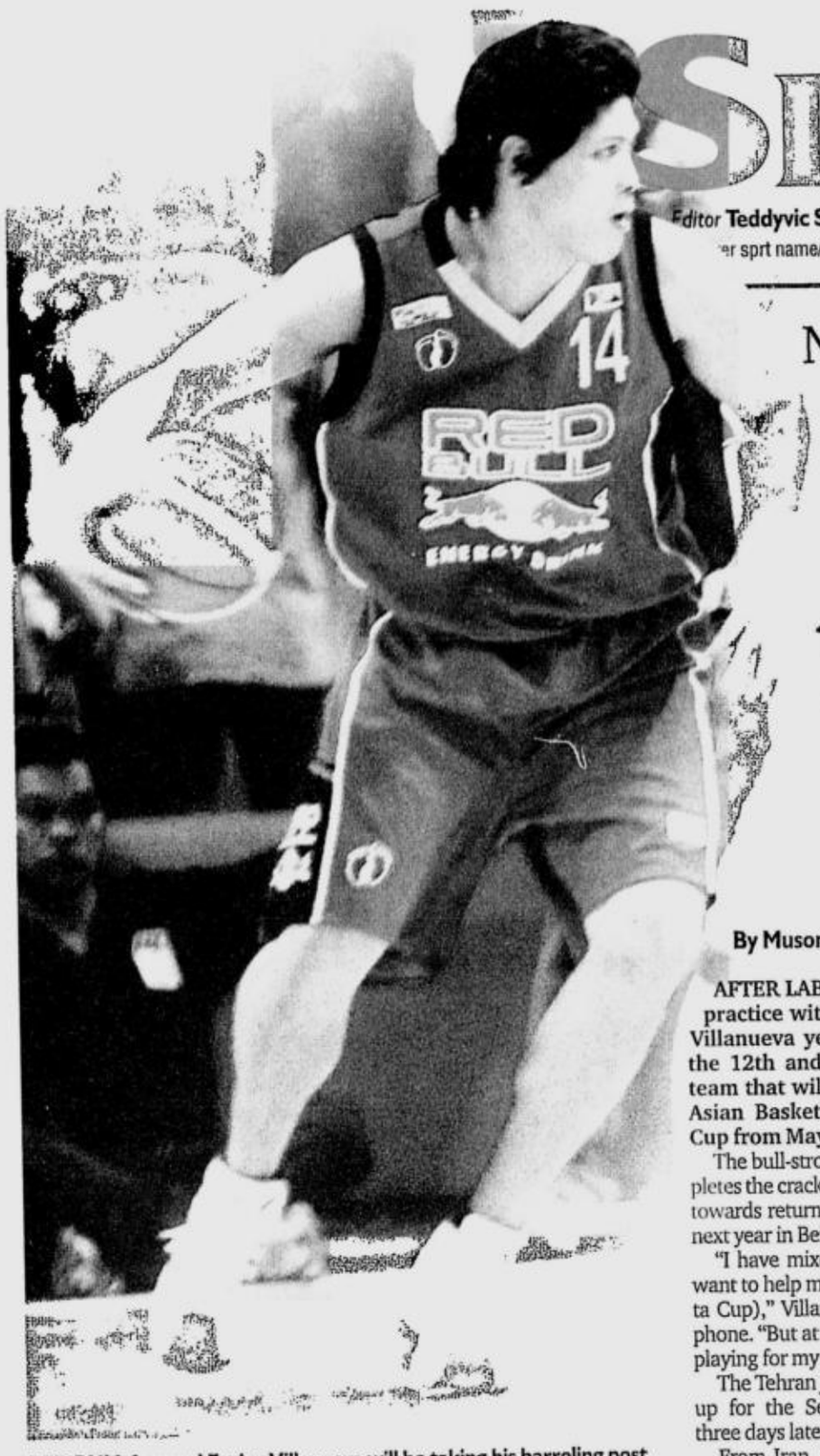




RED BULL forward Enrico Villanueva will be taking his barreling post moves to the RP squad. *For PBA results, see Late Sports on A16.* PDI PHOTO

NATIONAL TEAM

Villanueva takes place of Hatfield

By Musong R. Castillo

AFTER LABORING LONG AND HARD IN practice without any guarantees, Enrico Villanueva yesterday was rewarded with the 12th and final slot in the Philippine team that will see action in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association Champions Cup from May 12-20 in Iran.

The bull-strong 6-foot-6 Red Bull center completes the crack squad that will take another step towards returning to the Olympics, which is set next year in Beijing, China.

"I have mixed feelings because I would still want to help my team (Red Bull in the PBA Fiesta Cup)," Villanueva told the INQUIRER over the phone. "But at the same time, it's an honor to be playing for my country."

The Tehran joust will be the team's final tune-up for the Seaba championship in Thailand three days later on May 24 to 28.

From Iran, the team planes back for a one-day rest before departing the next day for Ratchaburi, Thailand, where it seeks at least a top two finish that would qualify the Philippines for the Fiba-Asia championship set in Tokushima, Japan in late July.

No less than a runner-up finish behind China in the Tokushima tournament is required for the Philippines to make it back to the Summer Games.

Villanueva, originally named as one of three alternates last March, has been one of the hardest workers in practice and has shown the best potential in replacing Rudy Hatfield in the roster.

Hatfield had to beg off his slot because of his scheduled marriage that was finalized before the RP team composition was announced.

It will be first international stint with the big boys for Villanueva, who has donned the national colors just once as an amateur in the 18-under ABC championship in India where the RP squad fared badly.

The former Ateneo ace will be out of Red Bull for at least three games in the Fiesta Cup.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Nowitzki pulls Mavs through /A24

■ Mayweather picked over De La Hoya /A22

Skip long travel for Palaro bets—PSC

By June Navarro

SHELVE THE PALARONG PAMBANSA AND replace it with a regional multi-sports endeavor to spare athletes and officials from long travel either by land or sea.

Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez said yesterday he would forward this piece of advice to the Department of Education (DepEd) in the wake of a vehicular accident Monday where four home-bound Palarong Pambansa delegates were killed in Cordon town in Isabela when the bus they were riding collided head-on with a Manila-bound bus shortly after midnight.

At least 40 other people were injured during the collision, 33 of them from the Tuguegarao-bound Florida Liner bus carrying the Palaro delegates.

Ramirez said he would suggest to DepEd officials the holding of separate regional meets in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao instead of hosting another Palaro on a nationwide level.

Ramirez explained that visiting student-athletes from far-flung areas are exposed to the dangers and hazards of traveling for long hours either by land or by sea.

The PSC top honcho, who was instructed by President Arroyo to compensate the victims, said the families of the fatalities would receive P20,000 each while an unspecified amount would be allocated to those who were injured.

"No amount can compensate for the loss of these lives, but we're hoping the little amount could help," said Ramirez, who went to Tuguegarao City, Cagayan yesterday.

The Cagayan Valley delegates were returning home from Koronadal City in South Cotabato where the Palaro was held. As a result of the unusually hot weather during the games, Marinduque National High School principal Carlos Mingi and Koronadal National High School teacher Edwin Gulmatico succumbed to heat exhaustion.

The accident report said the Tuguegarao-bound Florida bus of the Palaro delegates collided head-on with a Manila-bound bus shortly after midnight. Reports have it that the Tuguegarao-bound Florida Liner bus swerved to the opposite lane and hit a tree after one of its front tires exploded.

Mayweather picked to beat De La Hoya

By Salven L. Lagumbay

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—GOLDEN BOY Oscar De La Hoya and his rival Floyd Mayweather Jr. arrived at the MGM Grand here yesterday amid the pomp and pandemonium befitting two of the biggest stars in the sport who are about to duke it out for the WBC super welterweight crown this Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

As of yesterday, Sportsbook.com closed its book with Mayweather a favorite to defeat De La Hoya at -170 (a $100 bet wins $70), while De La Hoya is a +140 underdog (a $100 bet wins $140).

Mayweather arrived at about 11:30 a.m. on a big truck with his face and a big "World's Best Pound-for-Pound" sign scribbled across the vehicle. He was accompanied by his entourage made up of rappers and his training team.

A crowd of close to 3,000 eager fans jampacked the MGM Grand lobby, with their cameras in tow, all trying to vie for position to get a good angle at Mayweather, who is acknowledged as the world's best fighter pound-for-pound.

Eric Gomez, Golden Boy Promotions vice-president, described the fan turnout as "amazing" and swore he had never seen anything quite like this event.

"The crowd was fantastic. Everybody was just too eager to see the two fighters," said ALA manager Michael Aldeguer, who was among those who waited at the lobby together with his ward Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista and AJ Banal.

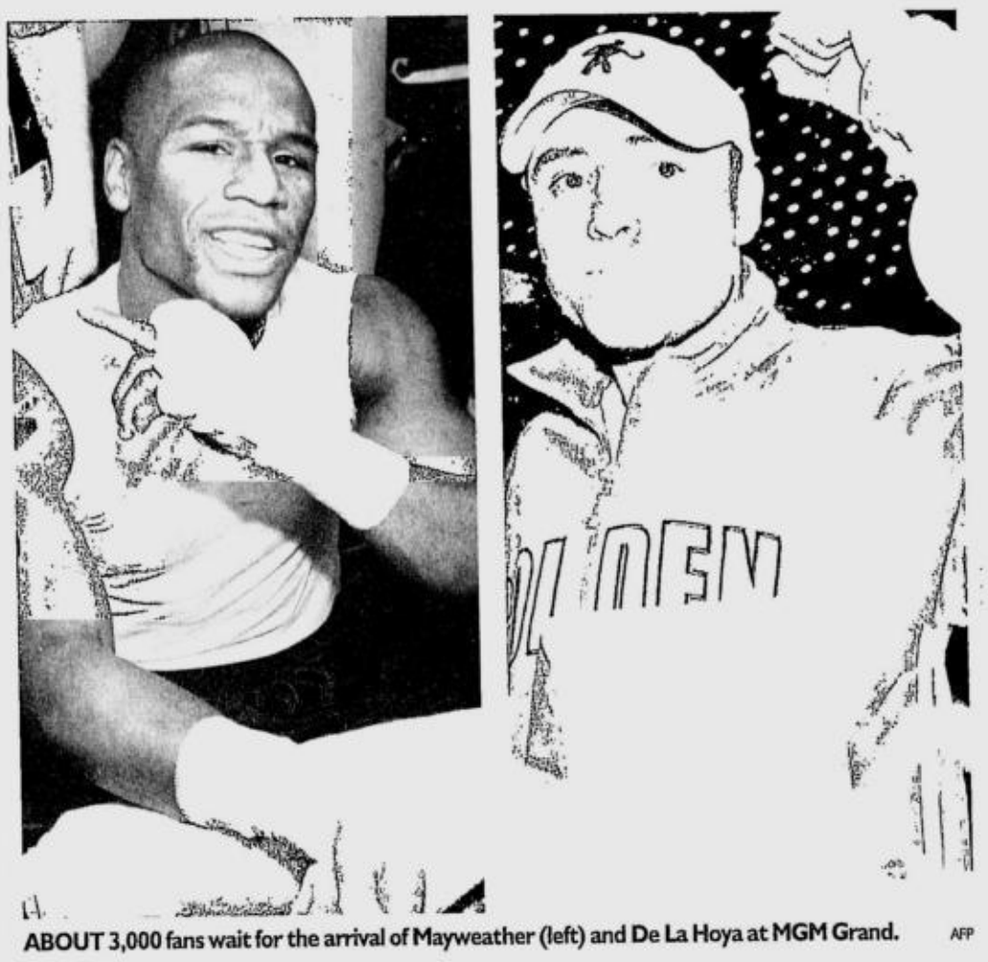
De La Hoya made his own grand entrance at the hotel lobby at around 12:30 p.m. accompanied by GBP chief executive officer Richard Schaefer and trainer Freddie Roach.

The same group of fans who trooped to see Mayweather also lingered around to get a close look at De La Hoya, who has been secretly working out at a Las Vegas gym for days after arriving from his main training camp in Puerto Rico.

The golden boy then took part in a closed-door afternoon workout with Bautista and Banal. The two, along with Aldeguer and wife Christine, as well as an HBO crew were the only ones allowed inside the gym.

De La Hoya and Mayweather take part in today's final press conference before the official weigh-in this Friday.

Ring Magazine, the acknowledged bible of boxing, reported in its June 2007 issue that 12 out of 20 boxing experts it interviewed have favored Mayweather to defeat De la Hoya, with only 8 favoring the latter.



ABOUT 3,000 fans wait for the arrival of Mayweather (left) and De La Hoya at MGM Grand. AFP

SPORTSWATCH

Lob for Rob tourney set May 6

THE MAIN DRAW OF THE "LOB FOR ROB" TOURNAMENT WILL BE HELD ON May 6 at the Valencia Badminton Center in Quezon City. The event is a fund-raising campaign for the kidney treatment of Robbie David, an account executive and a member of the AdBoard. There will be an entry fee of P850 per pair in the Class C, D and E categories, inclusive of competition t-shirts and other freebies. Tournament director and umpire Judith Brosula said participants must come to the venue at least an hour before matches start at 1 p.m. Organizer EX-DYR Alcantara Advertising, led by Jennifer Brosula, is inviting friends and enthusiasts to join the event to help David's family raise funds for his medical needs. Twelve Motorolla L6 cellphones, Coleman jugs, medals and certificates are at stake in the one-day tournament. Contact Anna Ylagan (0917-538171) Jennifer Brosula (0920-6725545) and Judith Brosula (0919-2449799).

Girls' volleyball up Saturday

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST BEGINS ITS DEFENSE OF ITS SHAKEY'S GIRLS' volleyball League title as the third season kicks off Saturday afternoon with a four-game schedule at the Ateneo. UE won both the Metro Manila leg and the Tournament of Champions last year, with mainstay Liza Yumang bagging the Most Valuable Player award. Philippine Volleyball Federation president Pete Mendoza and treasurer-director Vip Isada, together with Shakey's general manager Vic Gregorio, will do the ceremonial toss and declare the 3rd GVL open. After the 1 p.m. opening ceremonies, Batasan High School tackles Valenzuela High School, to be followed by the Colegio de San Agustin versus St. Jude High School clash. Other matches will pit Hope Christian School against Philippine Institute of Quezon City and E. Rondon High School versus Diliman Preparatory. Bacolod, Iloilo and Cebu will simultaneously conduct their own tournaments, led by defending champions Passi National High School (Iloilo), University of Southern Philippines (Cebu) and Doña Monserrat Lopez Memorial High School (Bacolod).

KidzHoops tourney firs off May 13

THE ALL-SUNDAY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS WILL its leveling day on May 13 at 2 p.m. right after the 1 p.m. registration at the RFM Gym along Pioneer St, Mandaluyong City. It will mark the opening of the 2nd Conference of Season 4 with the tournament proper starting on June 3 onwards. The tournament for age groups 14 and under and 11 and under has been constantly attracting individuals not only within Metro Manila but also from the nearby provinces. KidzHoops believes that by providing recreational opportunities for the youth in a safe and organized environment, the goal of offering a positive learning experience through playing will be achieved. For a registration fee of P1500, participants are assured of 4 league games + 1 tourney game with certified referees and table officials. Playing jerseys will be provided. Kids who wish to participate should come on the leveling day in their playing gear. For information and on-line registration, logon to www.kidzhoops.com or call 3710639 or cp 0917-2779134.

200 entries in Roligon 4-cocker

ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S "SUMMER HEAT 4-COCK DERBY," A THREE-DAY super cockfest expected to draw no less than 200 entries, sizzles on May 16, 18 and 21. Hosts Aba Badiola and William Chia who will be assisted by Danny Ty, said guaranteed prize is P1.3 million. Entry fee is P5,500. Every participant who scores two points in the 2-cock elimination rounds (May 16 and 18) will share in the P100,000 bonus prize. Meanwhile, the Todo Lakas Sa Paluan 5-cock derby is scheduled on May 31, June 2 and 4, with Rolly Ligon as host. The guaranteed prize amounts to a whopping P1.5 million for an entry fee of P7,700. For inquiries: 851-2275; 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona, Shirley or Tiling).

LPC cockfest gets going today

MORE THAN 100 SMALLTIME COCKERS AND BACKYARD BREEDERS CLASH today at Las Piñas Coliseum via the popular "Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan" beginning at 12 noon. The fastest win champion after every 10 fights and shall receive P10,000 and P5,000, respectively, said hosts Danny and Fermin Duque. Participants may register today from 7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Registration fee is only P500. A 3-cock event comes next on Saturday, May 5, with Baldo Perez as host. Five participants topped the 3-cock event last April 28: Jover Dilao (Jhezil Farms), Rudy Sayaman (John Carlo), Henry Medina (LP Vice 2007), Arnold Cruz (Sterling) and Poly Gold entry. For details: 873-1040; 874-3910 and 0926-7450375.

FAVORITE: Tuason Racing-R2R driver Juha Turalba is favored in the Junior ROK division after his big win over runner-up Roby Benito (left) and third placer Javi Benitez (right) in the last leg of the 2007 Shell Helix Karting Super Series.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(First Of All (1), Twist & Shout (2), Play It Again (5)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Tiger Song (3), Don Exequiel (2), Cara Dura (6), Gold Is Gold (5)
Race 3—(Tri)—King Anthony (4), Allysa's Choice /Kay Akino (5), Ideal gaze (2)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Barawanawest (4), Lion's Pride/Shutter (6), Itza Lemon (2), Our Sailor Moon (1)
Race 5—(Tri)—Leave No Doubt (4), Feverishly/Marque (2), Great Emma (1)
Race 6—Fine Offer (6), Fair Urduja (1), Bom's Bom's (4), Terry Toon
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Lady Commander (3), Mercurio (5), Mindpower Miss (4), Sports Illustrated (7)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ocean Cookie (10), Honoree (9), Yoshiwara (6), Mutiara (1), Scarab (8), Mister Cool (3)

Peping hails Paeng's appointment

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE PRESident Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. hailed the recent appointment of six-time world champion Paeng Nepomuceno as USBC (US Bowling Congress) ambassador and promised to help Nepomuceno campaign for bowling's inclusion in the Olympic Games.

"It's a big honor (Paeng) had brought to the country again," said Cojuangco. "Nobody else deserves (being named ambassador and coach) better than Nepomuceno."

Though confident Paeng would be able to do a lot to help the World FIQ (international federation) in working for the inclusion of bowling in the Olympic program, the POC chief said he's ready to help.

"In fact, I plan to call on my fellow officials in Southeast Asia and Asia so we can work together to have bowling in the Olympics," explained Cojuangco.

"*Pwedeng pagtulung-tulungan yan*," said Cojuangco of bowling's bid, "more so now that Paeng is one of those who will spearhead the campaign."

PAENG Nepomuceno (left) gets his appointment papers from USBC relations manager Dale Niemela.

Cojuangco also revealed that he had convinced POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros to keep his post (as FIQ president) "because he can help a lot."

Hontiveros, who had floated several months ago his desire to quit FIQ, bared that he has followed Mr. Cojuangco's advice. "I'm still the president. *Pwede kaming magtulong ni* Paeng," Hontiveros said.

Hontiveros, who arrived only the other day from a meeting of international federation and association of IOC recognized sports in Beijing, said he's happy with Nepomuceno's choice by the USBC.

"Maraming magagawa si Paeng para sa bowling," he added.

Hontiveros said he'd sit down with Paeng and AIM's Chippy Espiritu shortly to finalize the 33-point plan required by the IOC Sports Program Committee from each sport wishing top be played in the summer sportsfest.

South Africa's Kelly Fairweather heads the IOC body.

Tagaytay-Spring Oil rips Davao-Montaña

MALABON CITY—TAGAYTAY-Spring Cooking Oil waxed hot from the start to whip Davao-Montaña Pawnshop, 81-73, Tuesday night in the first ever NBC National Cup basketball game played at the newly built Oreta Sports Center here.

With main man Marlon Legaspi handcuffed by the tight Davao defense, another big man, Rodel Mallari, stepped up to lead the Cooking Oil Masters to their fourth straight win in the tournament.

Mallari posted 19 points and 19 rebounds for Spring coach Efren "Yong" Garcia.

Henry Fernandez led businessman Armando Quibod's Jewelers with 14 markers.

The Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and league EVP Mayor Bambol Tolentino posted their biggest lead at 62-45 going into the payoff period after surging to a 21-9 first-quarter advantage.

Mayor Tito Oreta, unopposed candidate under the Lakas-Kampi banner, his nephew and councilor bet Len-Len and Padilla graced the ceremonial toss to mark NBC's debut here.

The Jewelers suffered their second loss in eight games.

The scores:

SPRING 81—Mallari 19, Marquez 12, Tajonera 10, Reyes 7, Salud 6, Bolocon 4, Legaspi 4, Victolero 4, De Castro 2, Cuenca 0, Munoz 0.

DAVAO 73—Fernandez 14, Ayson 12, Espinosa 11, Lamocha 8, Ilanga 7, Jawod 6, Gonzaga 4, Canlas 2, Quibod 2, Braga 2, Dawal 1, Endrinal 0.

Quarters: 21-9, 45-27, 62-45, 81-73.

MALABON City Mayor Tito Oreta makes the ceremonial toss between Spring's Andrew Salud and Davao's Kevin Ronald Lamocha. Looking on are NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Len-Len Oreta, Lakas-Kampi bet for councilor.

Chief tuner Tan finds rhythm

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—CHIEF TUNER MATO Tan of Matonetics turned back the favorites to rule the third leg of the 2007 San Mig Coffee Drag Racing Championship recently at the Batangas Racing Circuit Drag Strip here.

Banking on his mastery of car engineering, Tan found the perfect setup for an ideal car—a Honda Chop Top owned by Cebuano drag racing champ David Lim of DGL Motorsports—to claim the Quick 8 crown.

He chipped in a fast 10.833 seconds to rule the final showdown against runner-up Mico Vinarao of Blanche Racing who clocked 11.883 seconds in the premier drag racing event.

Tan's victory marked the first time in three-years that no driver has dominated the first three legs of this series, thus making the hunt for the Drag Racing Driver of the Year diadem even more exciting.

"It was a close fight going into the final stretch," said Tan. "But with a good car setup on a champion DGL Motorsports car, we were able to hold on to the top spot in the final 50 meters rush to the finish line."

MATO Tan en route to victory.

Aguilar affirms Namssa supremacy

DEFENDING CHAMPION GLENN AGUILAR put on another show of talent supremacy as he swept both Pro Classes recently in the 2nd Mayor Tinga Cup-2007 National Motorcycle Safety and Sports Association (Namssa) National third round at the newly built Fast Track Circuit today in Upper Bicutan, Taguig City, in front of Camp Bagong Diwa.

Aguilar, gearing up for the Asian Motocross leg in Guam next month, turned back long-time rival Bebet de la Cruz and Dondon Yuzon in dominating both the Pro Open and the Pro 125 classes.

He was unstoppable right from the start, taking the holeshot and seizing a wide margin over his rivals midway of the race. As a treat to the spectators, Aguilar did his usual antics of clapping his legs while on mid-air that drew cheers from his fans.

De la Cruz and Yuzon were actually tied with 40 points apiece in the Pro 125 division but Bebet secured the runner-up honors with his second place finish in Moto 2.

Former champion Jovie Saulog, showing no rust despite his long absence from the motocross scene, checked in fourth while Jerry Beech ended fifth.

But Yuson got back at De la Cruz in the Pro Open division where he garnered a total of 40 points, just two points ahead of De la Cruz. Saulog again bagged fourth place.

Abdon, Tabuena make big moves

JOHN KIER ABDON, REGAN DE GUZMAN and Miguel Tabuena made the big moves as the pressure intensified yesterday in the fourth round of the Callaway Junior World qualifying tournament at the Sherwood Hills course in Trece Martires, Cavite.

Abdon swept past three-day leader Miko Yee with a two-under-par 70, grabbing a seven-shot lead in boys' Class A with a 279 total for 72 holes. Yee soared to a 78 under the searing heat and windy afternoon conditions for 286.

De Guzman came out of a four-day rest to match par 72 and pull away by eight strokes in the girls' division as erstwhile co-leader Paulina Sotto scored an 85 and dropped to third.

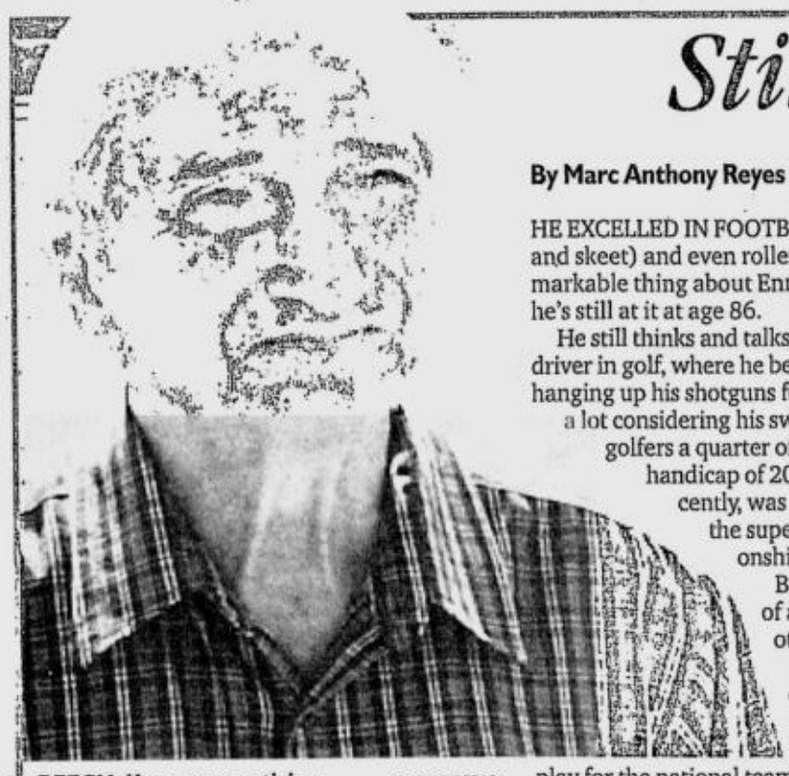
Tabuena grabbed the upperhand in boys' Class C when he shot a 77 for 295, bumping off Bino dela Paz who had an 81-299 while Cristina Potenciano also jumped ahead in girls' Class B with her 79-315.

But Miggy Yee, Wolen and younger sister Princess Superal, Irina Gabasa remained in control of their divisions.

PAL is giving each of the 12 division champions after the qualifier ending Friday a ticket to Los Angeles, California for the annual Callaway Junior World this coming July in San Diego, California.

Over at the Riviera Sports Club, Lance Uy and Daniel Bantug continued to lead by big margins but Mia Legaspi, a reigning Junior World champion, and Kristine Torralba found themselves threatened going into the last two rounds.

Still no beaching Beech at 86



BEECH: Keep on practicing RUDY ESPERAS

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HE EXCELLED IN FOOTBALL, SHOOTING (TRAP and skeet) and even roller hockey. But the most remarkable thing about Enrique Rocha Beech is that he's still at it at age 86.

He still thinks and talks as straight as he hits his driver in golf, where he became as skillfull after hanging up his shotguns for good. And that's saying a lot considering his swing allows him to beat golfers a quarter of his age and maintain a handicap of 20. In fact, Beech, until recently, was one of the top players in the super senior golf championships.

But that's getting way ahead of a story that started in another era.

Beech began his sporting career in 1937 as a football player for San Beda at the age of 16. He went on to play for the national team, competing in the Interport championships against the likes of Hong Kong and Macau. Back then, the Interport was a big-time event with the Asian Games still unheard of.

"Football was No. 1 back then [with] teams from England and Spain coming over here to play," said Beech, who covered the left field for the RP Team and the famed Turba Salvaje with the likes of Leo Prieto and the late Manila mayor Arsenio Lacson.

He recalled the days when crowds filled up the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and riots erupted during heated matches.

"I loved football a lot back then because there I was able to dominate. I could send the ball wherever I wanted to," he said.

His romance with football was ended by a broken left knee. Benefactors like William Chiongbian tried to help him get back into the game by shelling out money and sending him to Spain for operation.

"But at that moment I knew my football days were over," said Beech, who while recuperating, tried out—and made—the national team in shooting.

But he still played football good enough and was able to score a milestone of sorts.

Beech made both the football and shooting teams during the 1954 Asian Games held here, becoming the first Filipino to represent the country in two different disciplines in a high-scale sporting event.

As a national shooter, he bagged two bronze medals in trap during the 1954 and 1958 Asian Games. Beech also finished 16th and 37th in the Melbourne Olympics (1956) and Rome Olympics (1960), respectively, in the same event.

His trophy case is filled with proofs of his sporting achievements. But Beech remembers his first victory as an athlete, and that was in roller hockey when his team, Turba Salvaje, defeated American enlisted men based in Subic, John Hay, Nichols and Clark.

Beech continues to be an influence in sport in his own little way at the Philippine Sports Commission.

"When you have the will, you can make it. Keep on practicing," he admonishes young athletes whose training he monitors for the PSC. "Nowadays, the first thing they (athletes) ask is how much. Back then, we didn't talk about money."

STILL/ A24

Burger seeks lead again

MAPUA'S Gil Guillermo goes up against Ateneo's Martin Quimzon in the Filoil preseason tournament. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Takes on SM-Magnolia; Henkel battles Dazz

BURGER KING TRIES TO REGAIN THE solo lead when it collides with San Miguel-Magnolia today in the 2007 PBL Unity Cup at the Olivarez Sports Center.

Still feeling the sting of their 66-82 loss to the Toyota Balintawak Road Kings, the Burger Whoppers will attempt to jump back in front anew against the Beverage Masters in their 4 p.m. match.

While the upset loss will be the motivating factor for Burger King, San Miguel-Magnolia feels that defeat showed there's a crack in the armor of the erstwhile solo league-leader.

Meanwhile, Henkel Sista goes for its first win against erratic Dazz 'Sang Patak in the 2 p.m. opener.

STANDINGS

	W	L
Burger King	4	1
Harbour Centre	4	1
CL Pera Padala	3	2
Toyota Balintawak	3	2
Dazz 'Sang Patak	1	3
San Miguel-Magnolia	1	3
Henkel-Sista	0	4

GAMES TODAY (*Olivarez Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Henkel Sista vs Dazz
4 p.m.—Burger King vs Magnolia

Henkel Sista coach Caloy Garcia said he has already found the answer to his boys' problems but will need to translate it in the actual game.

The Super Sealers dropped their first two games miserably but displayed a tough stand in their next two. Henkel Sista even piled up a 20-point margin against Toyota Balintawak last Saturday before the Road Kings clawed back to post a 78-71 victory.

The key for Henkel Sista remains the 6-foot-9 Samigue Eman, who has averaged only 3.2 points and 2.2 rebounds so far.

But Dazz is having a turbulent start of its own, losing three straight games after winning over Toyota Balintawak in its first outing. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Bulldogs, Cards triumph

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAME THROUGH with a decisive endgame blitz to upset reigning NCAA champion San Beda, 84-76, yesterday in the Filoil-Flying V Preseason Invitational Cup at the new San Juan Arena.

Trailing 69-74 after a three-point shot by Red Lion JR Tecson, Bulldogs unloaded a 15-point bomb behind Jay Jahnke, Jonathan Fernandez and Mike Salbado combined for 15 points in the last two minutes to seal the victory in their maiden outing.

Fernandez and Jahnke paced the Bulldogs with 26 points while Pong Escobal shot 21 for the Lions, who beat the Letran Knights Sunday.

Mapua debuted with a double overtime conquest of the young Ateneo squad, 86-80, while University of the East clobbered Philippine Christian University, 89-61.

Eagle Lorenzo Gonzaga sent the match into overtime with a three-point shot, 67-67, while Arjay del Rosario forced the second extension for the Cardinals, 76-all.

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Tragic Palaro at Koronadal

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

AS IF THE RECORD TWO DEATHS AND 256 hospitalized delegates of the recently concluded Palarong Pambansa were not enough, four more died when the bus carrying Palaro delegates on their way home to Tuguegarao, Cagayan figured in an accident.

Shane Apolonio, a member of the sepak takraw team that finished third in the nationwide meet, football player Maynard Anog and coaches Manolo Magugac and Leonardo Adriano were confirmed dead while 40 other passengers were hurt. The Cagayan Valley delegation had earlier taken the 48-hour boat ride from General Santos to Manila. Then they took a bus for the 9-hour drive to Tuguegarao, where welcomers waited to fete the athletes with breakfast and a program, for a job well done.

With so much tragedy surrounding the Koronadal Palaro, how else could I look at this sporting event, but jinxed.

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INQUIRER scribe June Navarro, who covered the event reported that the 256 had been victims of various heat-related ailments ranging from heat stroke and sunstroke, severe exhaustion, dehydration, diarrhea and burns.

"I saw one runner who collapsed on the tracks at close range. At first I thought he had suffered a heat stroke, but when the attending physician Dr. Raymond Prieto looked at his feet, the entire soles of both had fallen off from third degree burns.

The doctor said they were only first degree burns, but it didn't look that way to us," June added.

Like so many other athletes from underprivileged areas, this trackster had just run on searing-hot grounds barefoot and had burned the soles of his feet.

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"In the next Palaro, they should no longer allow athletes to run barefoot. In the first place, I think they should no longer hold the Palarao in summer, which has become fatally hot," said June.

Indeed, this summer event has become so hazardous to health, much more than the threat of terrorism for which the government has warned the public. The department of health, instead, should have issued strict guidelines on how to protect themselves from the various complications caused by extreme heat.

June said it wasn't only the athletes that had been subjected to torture in Koronadal. Even the members of the media from Metro Manila had their own cross to bear.

"The press from Manila, all 18 of us composed of scribes and photographers, were barred from entering the venue. Only local media was allowed. We had to sneak in, go through obscure paths and practically had to wear disguises to crash the obstacles. Twice I had to high-jump the five-foot fence to get in. I don't know if the order to ban us came from Koronadal mayor Fernando Miguel, but he sure could have done something to facilitate our entry because we had appealed to him," June said.

"You're journalists, you're supposed to be resourceful," replied a Palaro official named Luz Almeda when one of the veteran scribes asked her how they could gain entry into the venue.

Going into the sixth or seventh day of the Palaro, the scribes noticed people milling around a vendor situated by the entrance of the venue.

When they took a closer look, they saw that he was selling media identification cards at P10 apiece.

Incidentally, congratulations to La Salle Greenhills for taking the basketball title in the elementary division. Representing the National Capital Region, LSGH was composed of Thomas Torres, Rodel Joven, Roel Marcial, Miguel Reyes, Adam Narciso, James Legaspi, Ron Matatas and Marvic Enriquez. They were beefed up by Francis Abarcar and Jao Ravago from San Beda College-Alabang, Jan Ortega of Makati Elementary School, and Arom Sta. Ana of Claret. The champs were coached by Hubert de los Santos.

***

Glad to hear that love ultimately prevailed in the Kris Aquino-James Yap saga. Kris happily reports that her family has stayed intact, despite all the intrigues and health crises she had to go through. The bad news, however, is that she will no longer be able to bear children.

"My doctors said Baby James is my last. There were just too many complications during and after delivery. I had to have a second operation to stem the profuse bleeding four days after delivery by C-section. I'm still on anti-hypertensive drugs because my BP was 180/110 post-delivery," Kris said.

According to Kris, not too many people know it but it was touch and go for her and Baby James—who could have died in utero—at one point.

While she and Baby James have been discharged from hospital, there remains a clot lodged in her lungs which she hopes would melt naturally over time, because she suffered an adverse reaction to the medicine she took to dissolve the clot. "My stomach bled, requiring that second surgery."

Kris said she and her family are very grateful to James "for really taking care of me and not leaving Baby James and me during our most precarious moments."

Calderon keeps Raptors alive

TORONTO, CANADA—JOSE CALDERON scored a career-high 25 points as Toronto stayed in contention in their first-round playoff series against New Jersey with a 98-96 victory in Game 5 on Tuesday.

Anthony Parker had 18 points and Morris Peterson added 17 for Toronto, which bounced back after suffering a pair of double-digit road losses and trails the series, 3-2.

"We shot the ball well," Raptors coach Sam Mitchell said. "We tapered off some in the second half, which is to be expected, but we just found a way to win the basketball game."

Toronton tries to even up the series in Game Six, which will be in New Jersey on Friday.

"We know it's not going to be easy, but we just have to keep going," Raptors forward Chris Bosh said. "We have nothing to lose right now, our backs are against the wall."

Calderon came through with a clutch performance after TJ Ford was hurt at the end of the first period.

The Spaniard took over at the point and scored 10 of his total in the second quarter for the Raptors, who took a 59-42 lead at halftime.

Ford was hurt when Nets forward Vince Carter landed on his upper torso scrambling for a loose ball near the end of the first period.

The fourth-year point guard was taken to the bench to receive treatment during a timeout and returned briefly to split a pair of free throws.

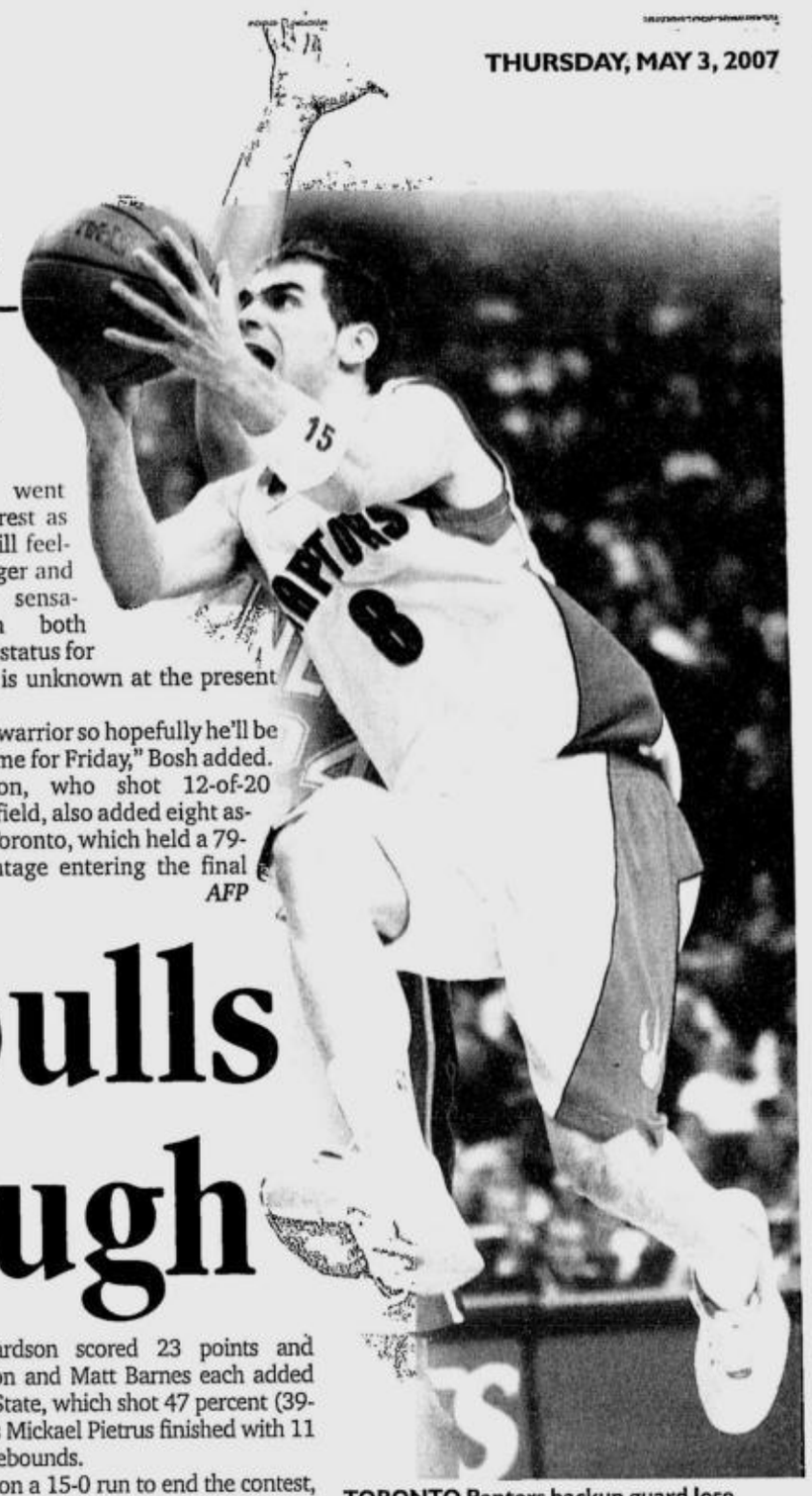
After the quarter ended, Ford was taken to an area hospital, suffering stinging sensations in both arms. He was released and was back on the bench in street clothes in the final period.

"All tests were negative and TJ is going to be re-evaluated in the morning," Raptors media relations director Jim Labumbard said.

"He went home to rest as he was still feeling a stinger and tingling sensations in both arms. His status for game six is unknown at the present time."

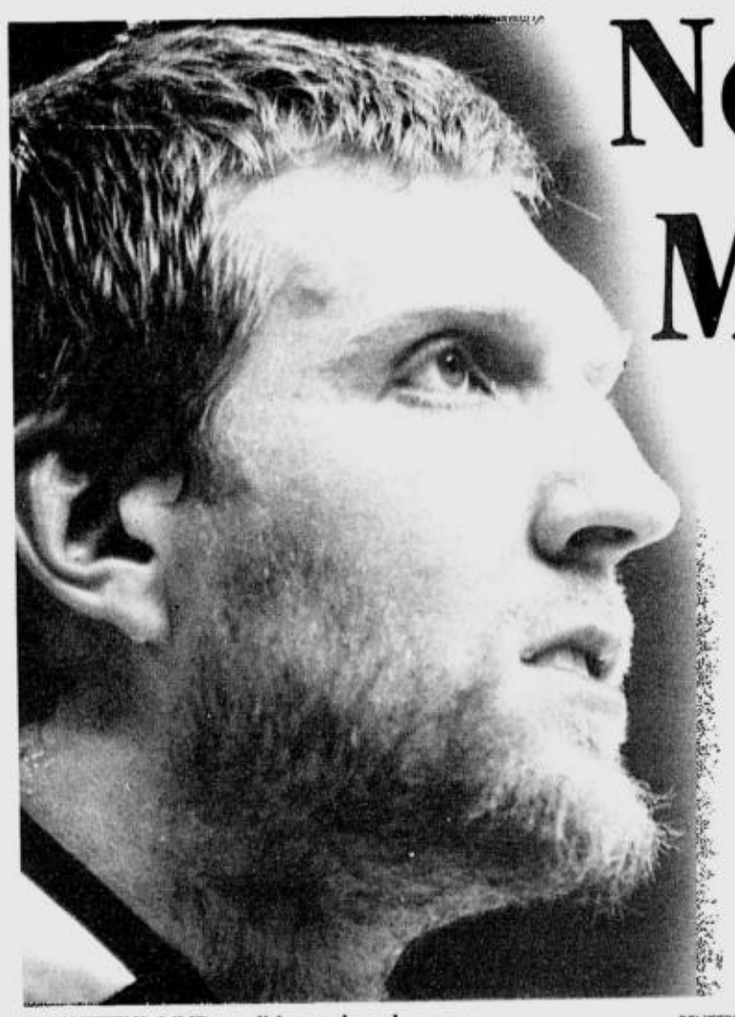
"TJ's a warrior so hopefully he'll be back in time for Friday," Bosh added.

Calderon, who shot 12-of-20 from the field, also added eight assists for Toronto, which held a 79-67 advantage entering the final period. *AFP*



TORONTO Raptors backup guard Jose Calderon rescues his team from elimination. AP

Nowitzki pulls Mavs through



NOWITZKI: MVP candidate takes charge. REUTERS

DALLAS, TEXAS—DIRK NOWITZKI SCORED 30 points and Josh Howard added 23 as Dallas stayed in contention in their first-round playoff series against Golden State with a 118-112 win in game five on Tuesday.

Devin Harris had 16 points and Jerry Stackhouse added 15 off the bench for Dallas, which erased a nine-point lead in the final three minutes to temporarily avoid one of the most shocking upsets in NBA history.

Dallas is trying to avoid becoming the first No. 1 seed to lose in a seven-game series and just the third all-time.

"Just being more aggressive helped us out a lot," said Dallas coach Avery Johnson.

The Mavericks, who won a league-high 67 games during regular season, were toppled twice on the road in games three and four to fall behind 3-1 in series.

The Mavericks appeared to be done when Baron Davis, who finished with 27 points and nine assists, drilled a three-pointer from the arc to give the Warriors a 112-103 lead with 3:26 left.

Jason Richardson scored 23 points and Stephen Jackson and Matt Barnes each added 16 for Golden State, which shot 47 percent (39-of-83). France's Mickael Pietrus finished with 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Dallas went on a 15-0 run to end the contest, including 12 by Nowitzki, who was called out before the game by Johnson for not being aggressive enough in the two playoff defeats in Oakland.

Nowitzki, a leading candidate for regular-season MVP honors, nailed the second of his consecutive three-pointers to bring the Mavericks to within 112-109 with 2:05 left.

Harris scored on a layup to bring Dallas to within one, 112-111, before Nowitzki drilled two from the charity stripe to put the Mavericks in front, 113-112, with 48 seconds left.

"Devin was more aggressive and that is something we talked about while watching film. Hopefully he will be just as aggressive next game," Johnson said.

Dallas made five more free throws to close out the game, including one due to a technical foul by Jackson. It was the second ejection of the series for Jackson and it will cost him dearly.

"Jackson will be fined a substantial amount for getting thrown out," Warriors coach Don Nelson said. "He's going to have to figure it out that you just don't do that."

Seattle lost to Denver in five games in 1994 and the Miami Heat also lost in five games to eight seed New York in 1999.

Dallas began the game highly charged, as Howard and Nowitzki each had eight points in the first quarter to help the Mavericks take a 38-28 lead into the second period. *AFP*

Els finds ideal Open warm-up

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—ERNIE Els believes his second successive appearance at the Wachovia Championship could provide an ideal warm-up for next month's US Open at Oakmont.

The Quail Hollow Club, a tree-lined par-72 layout of 7,442 yards with three-inch thick rough, is running fast and firm in typical major championship fashion.

"It is the kind of golf course that I really like and I'm looking forward to it," South African Els said on his official website.

"I had a bit of an up-and-down few days here last year but, despite that, I remember thinking straight after the tournament had finished that I wanted to come back again in 2007."

Els, who opened with consecutive 71s at Quail Hollow last year before falling back into a tie for 38th, knows this week will place a premium on accurate driving.

"It's probably one of the toughest golf courses on the PGA Tour right now," the twice US Open champion said. *Reuters*

In NBA, it matters if you're black or white, says study

NEW YORK—AN ACADEMIC STUDY of NBA officiating found that white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players, The New York Times reported in Wednesday's editions.

The study by a University of Pennsylvania assistant professor and Cornell graduate student also found that black officials called fouls more frequently against white players than black, but noted that that tendency was not as pronounced.

Justin Wolfers, an assistant professor of business and public policy at Penn's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, said the difference in calls "is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew."

The study, conducted over a 13-season span through 2004, found that the racial makeup of a three-man officiating crew affected calls by up to 4 1/2 percent.

The NBA strongly criticized the study, which was based on information from publicly available box scores, which show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

"The study that is cited in the New York Times article is wrong," president of league and basketball operations Joel Litvin told The Associated Press on Tuesday night. "The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor Wolfers.

"The short of it is Wolfers and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

Litvin said the NBA's study, using data from November 2004 to January 2007, included some 148,000 calls and included which official made each call. The Times said the NBA denied a request by Wolfers and Price to obtain that information, citing its confidentiality agreement with the officials.

The study also found differences in everything from a decrease in scoring to a rise in turnovers depending on the officials' race.

"Player-performance appears to deteriorate at every margin when officiated by a larger fraction of opposite-race referees," Wolfers and Price wrote.

But the key finding was in regard to foul calls, saying "black players receive around 0.12-0.20 more fouls per 48 minutes played when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three."

The NBA has an observer at each game and closely monitors its officials, who are required to file reports after each game they work and are expected to be able to explain each potentially controversial call they have made.

Litvin said in an original version of the paper, dated March 2006, Wolfers and Price concluded that there was no bias. He added that the NBA's research "all prove beyond any doubt in our minds that these guys are just flat wrong." *AP*

Rookie bails Yankees out

DALLAS—ROOKIE PHIL HUGHES PITCHED 6 1/3 hitless innings to lead the struggling Yankees to a 10-1 rout of the Texas Rangers on Tuesday.

Robinson Cano broke out of a slump with four hits and three RBIs to lead a 14-hit Yankee attack as the last-place New Yorkers won on the road for the first time since April 14. It was their second victory in three games following a seven-game losing skid.

The 20-year-old Hughes, making only his second big-league start, was sailing along in the seventh inning when he injured his left hamstring.

Early indications pointed to the injury being serious, with reports surfacing that the prized Yankee prospect would miss 4-6 weeks.

"I'm not in like agonizing pain or anything like that," Hughes told reporters. "I don't really feel that it's too bad."

But manager Joe Torre was less optimistic.

"It's going to be some time," he said. *Reuters*

Dementieva survives shaky serve, weather

DEMENTIEVA: Tough conditions

WARSAW, POLAND—ELENA DEmentieva battled a shaky serve and frigid weather—including snow flakes—to beat Meilen Tu, 6-7 (5), 6-0, 7-5, in the first round of the J&S Cup on Tuesday.

"They were extremely difficult conditions, it was freezing out there and also the snow, it was a new experience in my life," Dementieva said. "It was a very tough match for me."

Both players wore pants and long-sleeve shirts on a windy 9 degree C (48 F) day that saw snow flakes fall on the red-clay court.

The seventh-seeded Dementieva and her American opponent struggled to hold serve throughout the match. The first set alone had 10 breaks, the last by Tu to force the tiebreaker.

The Russian pulled out in the second round of Antwerp in February with stress fracture of the ribs, and she had only started training again two weeks ago.

"I always have some problems with my serve, but coming back after three broken ribs and not playing for eight weeks, it's really difficult," Dementieva said. "It takes some time to get everything back."

Dementieva's serve was better in the second set, but the third was almost a repeat of the first set.

Tu broke to lead 5-4 when Dementieva knocked a running forehand wide and served for the match. But Dementieva won the next three games, surviving two breakpoints in the process, to close it out.

Also Tuesday, Elena Vesnina beat Urszula Radwanska, 2-6, 7-6 (4), 6-3; Agnieszka Radwanska downed Tsvetana Pironkova, 7-5, 6-1; Julia Vakulenko defeated Elena Likhovtseva, 6-4, 6-1; Kateryna Bondarenko beat Tamira Paszek Austria, 6-1, 6-7 (3), 6-1; Tathiana Garbin beat Laura Granville, 6-4, 6-2; and Anna-Lena Groenefeld eased past Kaia Kanepi, 6-2, 6-4.

Venus Williams' match with Michaella Krajicek was pushed back until Wednesday due to darkness. *AP*

Still no beaching Beech at 86

From page A23

A father of four whose ages range from 40 to 63, Beech gladly shared the secrets of his longevity: "I don't smoke, I don't drink. But I eat everything. A lot."

It is a routine that has helped him keep fit all these years. In fact, he only began to take medication for hypertension 10 years ago . His only exercise now is walking up four storeys of the PSC building almost every day.

Throughout his athletic career, Beech has gained enough victories to fill up a newspaper section, yet the one thing that sticks out in his mind is one title that got away. Or, to be more apt, the one he let slip away.

In the late 70's, Beech competed in a shooting event called "Tiro Pichon" in Madrid, Spain.

The event requires marksmen to shoot at eight live pigeons released at the same time with the winner getting an exquisite bed and the runner-up a gun.

"I could have easily won the title but I didn't know how to bring the bed back home," he said. So he made a choice and settled for the gun.

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BUSINESS

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Trump eyes partnership with BCDA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo talks to one of the stall owners selling Filipino delicacies at the launching of the Livelihood Lending Facility for Government Employees Wednesday at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City. REY BANIQUET/OPS-NIB

Bidding requirement seen as snag to deal

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MORE HIGH ROLLERS IN REAL ESTATE ARE looking at pieces of real estate owned by the Bases Conversion Development Authority, with exploratory talks being initiated with flamboyant entertainment tycoon Donald Trump on possible joint-venture projects.

Narciso L. Abaya, BCDA president and chief executive, said in a telephone interview that the discussions with Trump were preliminary, details of which he was not at liberty to give.

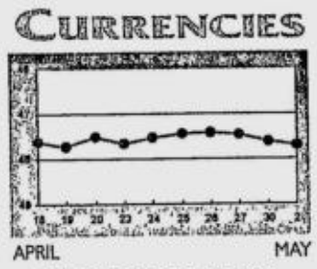
An INQUIRER source said that executives of Trump Organization, which also includes hotel and casino operator Trump Entertainment, made a presentation through a video conference with BCDA officials a week ago.

Having overcome bankruptcy from previous investments,

TRUMP/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 47.71 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 2, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B2)

Share prices end flat

SHARE PRICES CLOSED FLAT YESTERDAY as last-minute profit-taking in blue chips offset gains in the broader market, dealers said.

Investors turned cautious in the absence of fresh leads and did not sustain the early buy interest, with important elections for Congress due middle of this month a major concern.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 1.26 points at 3,271.99 after trading between 3,270.92 and 3,308.46.

Gains led declines 52 to 43 with 63 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 4.59 billion shares worth P3.99 billion.

SHARES/ B2

BIOFUELS LAW TAKES EFFECT SUNDAY

Biodiesel, pioneering firm face acid test

By Daxim L. Lucas

AN ESTIMATED 2,000 FILIPINOS DIE prematurely each year due to exposure to air pollution from vehicle emissions at a cost of up to $140 million to the local economy, according to a study prepared by the World Bank.

The data, published by the government's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), also reveals that an additional 9,000 Filipinos suffer from chronic bronchitis each year further burdening the economy to a tune of $120 million annually.

The combined cost of healthcare expenses and lost productivity due to air pollution has been estimated at 0.6 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

"Poor air quality threatens not only the well-being of city-dwellers but our long-term productivity as well, especially in terms of the quality of life, material and vegetation damage, reduced tourism to the country, discouraged foreign investments, among others," said the EMB in an advisory posted on its website.

FEATURE

The warnings are clear. But is anybody listening?

Publicly listed firm Chemrez Technologies Inc. hopes so. It produces coconut methylester (CME) or coco biodiesel, the sale of which the recently enacted Biofuels Law will make compulsory on Sunday, May 6, 2007.

During a recent interview, Chemrez officials admitted that the company's success depends on the consumers making a conscious decision to buy environment-friendly fuel for their vehicles.

"We believe Filipino motorists are more conscious now about the environment," Chemrez chief operating officer Jun Ang Lao said in an interview. "The timing is perfect."

Indeed, studies presented by the company show that consistent use of diesel

BIODIESEL/ B4

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Megaworld sets July launch for P3.5-B Araneta project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER MEGAworld Corp. yesterday announced that it has earmarked P3.5 billion for the three-tower, first phase of its joint venture project with the Araneta group following favorable market response.

Anthony Charlemagne Yu, president of the joint venture firm Megaworld Center Properties Inc., said in a statement that the project, dubbed Manhattan Garden City, was scheduled for groundbreaking in July as buyers have snapped up half of the inventory.

Megaworld owns 85 percent of MCPI, which will develop 5 hectares of the 35-hectare Araneta Center, with at least 3 hectares devoted to resort-inspired amenities such as swimming pools, gardens, landscapes and trellises.

Yu said the Araneta group was slated to turn over the property at the Araneta Center in June, while the project itself was committed for delivery in 2011. Phase 1 is expected to be completed within four years.

"We sold out Tower 1 last January and, after launching Tower 2 in February, we have already sold almost half of our inventory as of the first week of April," Yu said. "The market has received Manhattan Garden City warmly."

He described Manhattan Garden City as a major part of the redevelopment of the Araneta Center into a thriving shopping, residential, business and leisure hub.

"It is the country's first and only transit-oriented development that boasts of direct connection to both the LRT 2 and MRT 3 lines, thus making it easy and practical for residents to travel around the metro," Yu said.

"(Manhattan Garden City) would feature a variety of amenities ranging from the passive to semi-active and active, to give residents a wide array of choices to enjoy their time with their loved ones, he added.

Yu explained that the project was given a push through Megaworld's partnership with Security Bank, whose home loan program dubbed Homelite offered homeowners interest rates of as low as 5.5 percent.

"Terms can be as short as five years to as long as 25 years," Yu said. "As a pilot project for Homelite, Manhattan Garden City gives aspiring first-time homeowners flexibility in terms of their budgets."

Aside from residences, Megaworld is also known for developing condominiums that cater to the needs of business process outsourcing firms such as projects in Eastwood City.

Megaworld has lined up additional buildings in Eastwood City, such as the BPO Building and e-Commerce Plaze set for completion this year; 1180 Eastwood Avenue and Global One Center for 2008; Techno Plaza 2 for 2009, and International Finance Center for 2010.

Power pray

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SAN MIGUEL, THE BIGGEST LISTED food and beverage business here, intends to make a serious aggressive bid for the Masinloc (Zambales) power plant.

Word going around is that the board, in which seven power-play seats still belong to the government, already approved the "investment."

A storm of controversies hit last year's privatization of the Masinloc plant, as the government's PSALM awarded the sale to an apparent "broker" who had no capital.

And now an internationally known powerhouse group like San Miguel is joining the bidding for the same plant.

Immediately, you may think "face saving" somewhere!

But the company just made money from its investment in Del Monte Pacific, which it recently unloaded for a cool $150 million to the Campos group of Unilab.

And somebody high in San Miguel already figured out that the Masinloc power plant, managed properly, should yield a much higher Ebitda than Del Monte Pacific's.

But what is San Miguel doing outside its core business?

One possibility is, it will turn around the Masinloc plant and sell it at a profit later, which is exactly the line of attack in the Del Monte Pacific investment.

Last year, Del Monte Pacific made a dramatic turnaround with a 13-percent profit increase (at $21 million), following a 34-percent profit decline in 2005.

In business, they regard San Miguel vice chair and COO Ramon Ang as a turnaround artist. For instance, his group bought the losing Diamond Hotel (on Roxas Boulevard) and, in less than a year, made it profitable.

Or maybe San Miguel wants the Masinloc plant as insurance against future power shortages, which are certain to shoot power rates up to the sky.

Look, San Miguel already bought the big power generator that was used in the construction of the San Roque dam in Pangasinan.

Despite repeated warnings from the private sector of power shortages in a surging economy, our Napocor took it easy and did not build any new plant. Let us pray!

* * *

DURING his time as customs collector of the Port of Manila, the idealistic young lawyer Ronnie Silvestre posted a P2.6-billion surplus in his collection in just one year.

And so why, based on an "unofficial" military intelligence report, which apparently was being hidden from Gloriaetta, would this cute administration remove a guy like Silvestre from his position?

It was, according to the report, because of the "padrino" system!

While Silvestre was doing a good job, he was also known to have no political connection. Despite his being a "Kapampangan!"

It seems the spouse of a politician who backed up Gloriaetta during the "Hello, Garci" crisis had a hand in Silvestre's replacement in such a sensitive position.

Now going around business, the "unofficial" report noted that the going rate (and you know what I mean) at the Port of Manila now is P5,000 per container.

That means about P20 million a month for "tara," which is the nicely laced customs lingo for "bribe."

As "padrino," one high official of the Department of Finance gets about P500,000 a month from a single BOC official.

The report stated for instance that a certain "RD," who apparently has two namesakes (one in banking and another in PR), also claims to have had a hand in the appointment of a top BOC official and thus gets a handsome "tara."

And all along Gloriaetta thought that she had the BOC straightened out.

Since BOC personnel owe their appointments to the "padrinos," they hardly have any loyalty to Customs Commissioner Boy Morales.

Or maybe even to Gloriaetta!

* * *

A CONGRESSIONAL candidate in Metro Manila seems to have gotten hold of an impending move to seek the candidate's disqualification for "immorality."

Word is out that the candidate no longer brings around, at least not in the campaign sorties, this somebody who hails from Cavite and who happens to be ... well, "married."

It is common knowledge in the city that the candidate has an ongoing affair with that married somebody, who is said to have already left the conjugal house.

It is a good move for the candidate, if you ask me. If a scandal would break out from the "affair," it would only put to waste all that huge sum of money that the candidate already spent.

Word is out that our candidate is offering "reward" (or "prize," according to one Cabinet member) to every barangay where the candidate will win.

Really, politics has come to that!

* * *

INSURANCE Commissioner Evangeline Crisostomo-Escobillo reacted to our piece last Thursday. Here, in reaction to our report that Escobillo scrapped the capital build-up program so painstakingly put together by her predecessor, is the first part:

"The commission did not 'immediately scrap' the program. It merely undertook a thorough actuarial and market analyses... As a result, Department Order No. 27-2006 was issued on Sept. 1, 2006, requiring insurance companies to have a step-up increase in total capitalization to P100M by Dec. 31, 2006, until it reaches P500M by Dec. 31, 2011.

"Moreover, since the required step-up capitalization would not capture the companies' risk exposure, again, within a year of my tenure as commissioner, a thorough study was made in consultation with the industry that resulted in the issuance of Insurance Memorandum Circular No. 6-2206 and 7-2006 on Oct. 5, 2006, prescribing the Risk-Based Capital framework for life and non-life insurers, respectively. Both the step-up capital requirement and the RBC framework shall be subject to review at least once every three (3) years." (To be continued for lack of space!)

Stop it; I can't take anymore! And so what has that got to do with the price of eggs in Cambodia?

Let me see if I get Escobillo right—you mean, the previous commissioner, who is a veteran insurance man, respected in the industry in all those years, did not conduct, er, "thorough" studies for his program—is that it?

Escobillo, by the way, never had any supervisory position in any insurance company, both private and government.

Trump eyes partnership ...

From page B1

Trump currently owns more than 18 million square feet of prime Manhattan real estate.

However, Abaya said a possible stumbling block to the prospective partnership was that the BCDA, being a government agency, was required to hold competitive biddings before it could go into deals with the private sector.

"BCDA is not allowed to go directly in a partnership," he said. "This is the same issue that is holding back from (the agency) signing a deal with the Shanghai Shimao group (for a $2-billion project)."

He was referring to a partnership with one of China's top real estate developers, the way to which had been paved with a memorandum of understanding signed in March.

The MOU followed a recent visit of Shimao group chair Hui Wing Mau, who had expressed interest in investing between $2 billion and $4 billion in high-end hotel and mixed-use buildings in the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City.

According to the BCDA, the MOU provided for the conduct of detailed studies on future joint development projects with BCDA, which would make the Bonifacio Global City a key international business district.

The deal proper was supposed to have been signed during President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to China last month.

Abaya said he and other BCDA officials made a concurrent trip to China to discuss how to address the limitation.

"This is one of the kinks we are trying to iron out before any contract can be signed with the Shimao group," he said.

When asked whether the same issue would be a hurdle for a possible partnership with the Trump Organization, Abaya said "yes."

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 2, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	13	13	12.5	12.5	23,900
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	64.5	65	63.5	63.5	2,161,300
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	59.5	60	59.5	60	954,700
935	624	China Banking Corp.	860	860	860	860	180
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
119	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	103	106	103	105	19,720
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	1,450,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	63	63	61.5	62	3,000,500
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	46	46	46	46	21,200
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	63	63	63	63	3,000
39.57	12.17	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	27.5	27.5	26.5	27.5	5,417,000
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	78.5	79.5	78.5	79	285,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
7.7	1.5	CnlseOnline.com Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	284,000
6.3	3.5	Filipino Fund Inc.	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.8	43,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,300
2,000.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	190
5	4.2	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.3	33,058,000
2.22	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	220,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc	530	530	530	530	880
1.84	1.02	Wealthcare Corp.	1.76	1.84	1.76	1.84	9,148,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
0.37	0.16	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	150,000
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	57	57.5	56.5	57	675,200
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	77	78.5	76.5	77	1,834,700
12.75	6.5	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12	12	12	12	7,234,600
81	12.75	Manila Electric Co. A	72	75.5	72	74.5	698,800
82	18.5	Manila Electric Co. B	74	76	74	75	3,324,200
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.7	28,939,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.5	3,815,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	59,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO	4.6	5	4.6	4.85	732,000
5	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.08	2.14	344,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	1,000
3.4	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	114,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	50.5	52.5	50.5	51.5	1,341,700
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.36	1.36	540,000
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	2.34	2.36	2.34	2.36	310,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	64.5	64.5	64	64.5	76,900
67.5	61	San Miguel Corp. A	72.5	73	72.5	73	232,500
84	68	San Miguel Corp. B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	240,000
0.51	0.165	Swift Foods Inc.	16	16.75	16	16.5	7,634,500
24	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.					
		CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.85	6,538,000
5.17	1.07	EEI Corp.	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.8	111,000
9.1	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	5	5.8	5	5.6	42,000
7	1	Republic Cement Corp.	1.76	1.8	1.74	1.8	707,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.					
5.9	1.26	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.4	7,258,000
0.95	0.185	Metro Alliance Holdings and Eqts. A	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	80,000
0.99	0.25	Metro Alliance Holdings and Eqts. B	0.75	0.75	0.74	0.75	110,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	0.06	Pryce Resources Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.26	0.28	26,239,000
		HOLDING FIRMS	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	252,000
4.35	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	100,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.53	0.53	13,420,000
0.59	0.17	APC Group Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	110,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	26,800,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	9	9.1	9	9.1	1,731,000
9.7	4.85	Abaitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	86,000,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	960,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	790,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	2.1	2.18	2.1	2.18	22,664,000
2.18	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	610	610	595	595	416,870
680	327.5	Ayala Corp.	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.75	25,300
13.75	7.58	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.75	429,000
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.8	48,839,000
4.45	0.96	Benpres Holdings Corp.	7.2	7.5	7.2	7.4	7,001,000
7.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	220,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
0.42	0.13	Forum Pacific Inc.	2.9	2.95	2.9	2.95	405,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.25	1,839,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	2	2	2	2	31,000
2	0.61	Jollivile Holdings Corp.	2.6	2.65	2.5	2.5	60,000
2.65	1	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	10.75	11	10.75	11	466,100
12.5	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.3	3.15	3.2	1,280,000
3.6	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.85	109,000
5.4	1.04	PAL Holdings Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	1,970,000
0.48	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	357.5	365	355	355	128,510
407.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	13,260,000
0.51	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	514,000
1.34	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	6,620,000
0.41	0.05	Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	0.155	0.16	0.15	0.16	5,000,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	450,000
0.55	0.15	Zeus Holdings Inc.					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	69,000
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.44	0.45	1,350,000
18.5	10.25	Ayala Land Inc.	17.75	18	17.5	17.5	4,337,400
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.26	1.26	6,836,000
3.1	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.38	2.4	2.32	2.4	923,000
4.5	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.25	4.4	4.2	4.4	163,000
2.1	1	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp. B	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.7	225,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.45	1,600,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	1,720,000
2	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2	2	2	2	50,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.78	31,340,000
0.165	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.14	0.14	3,920,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.73	4,500,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.78	1.82	1.78	1.8	53,539,000
0.33	0.05	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	430,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	7,000,000
1.8	0.72	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	40,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	100,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.65	0.67	2,990,000
3.95	1.25	Megaworld Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.25	3.35	59,365,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.65	325,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.59	1,080,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	18.25	18.25	17.75	18	10,540,700
5.7	1.48	SM Development Corp.	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.5	4,565,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.5	3,506,100
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.64	0.69	0.64	0.69	1,150,000
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.205	3,590,000
		MEDIA	28	28	28	28	202,100
29	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	112,000
1.2	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.					
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS	1.68	1.7	1.66	1.66	904,000
2.12	1.06	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1,235.00	1,235.00	1,220.00	1,225.00	47,810
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	2,540.00	2,560.00	2,540.00	2,540.00	158,470
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.7	775,000
7.9	3	Pilipino Telephone Corp.					
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	10,140,000
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.4	6	6.1	229,000
6.8	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.6	1,187,000
7.1	2	IPVG Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	1,000,000
0.0675	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	50,000
1.84	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.047	32,900,000
0.06	0.025	PhilWeb Corp. Inc.					
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	120,000
1.88	1.14	Abotiz Transport System Corp.	5.6	6.8	5.6	6.7	4,207,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	27.5	28	27.5	28	451,900
32	11.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	1.66	1.98	1.66	1.8	1,951,000
1.98	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	11,000
1.74	0.8	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.					
		HOTEL & LEISURE	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	1,054,000
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	2,000
4	2.7	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	0.38	0.4	0.37	0.39	2,460,000
0.45	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.87	0.94	0.87	0.91	13,740,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.					
		EDUCATION	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.15	84,000
3.7	2.65	People Inc.					
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES	4	4.05	4	4	430,000
4.35	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	14.75	14.75	14.25	14.25	1,274,800
16	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	29	29	27	27	492,200
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	2,000
1.8	1	Philcomsat Holdings Corp.					
		MINING	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	63,400,000
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	415,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	115,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	17.5	18.5	17.5	18.25	2,899,900
18.5	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	11.25	11.25	11	11.25	84,000
14.75	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	20,000
4	1.62	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	1.82	1.88	1.82	1.86	17,216,000
1.91	0.0602	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.31	4,830,000
0.42	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	2,350,000
0.47	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.035	942,500,000
0.035	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.037	0.039	0.036	0.039	497,600,000
0.039	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	274,500,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	5.1	5.1	5	5	9,333,000
5.9	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	26	26.5	26	26.5	695,800
32	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	0.79	0.79	0.74	0.77	690,000
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.34	1.4	1.34	1.38	12,782,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.					
		OIL	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.41	3,130,000
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	377,900,000
0.017	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	44,100,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	8,000
14.81	6.31	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	1,663,200,000
0.0182	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.					

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 2, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.734754	1.000000	47.5360
Japan	Yen	0.006135	0.008350	0.3969
United Kingdom	Pound	1.468920	1.999200	95.0340
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.093931	0.127840	6.0770
Switzerland	Franc	0.605134	0.823588	39.1501
Canada	Dollar	0.661702	0.900576	42.8098
Singapore	Dollar	0.483486	0.658025	31.2799
Australia	Dollar	0.608542	0.828226	39.3706
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.949053	2.652661	126.0969
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.195929	0.266660	12.6759
Brunei	Dollar	0.481901	0.655867	31.1773
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000110	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.022456	0.030562	1.4528
UAE	Dirham	0.200058	0.272279	12.9431
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.361000	64.6965
Korea	Won	0.000789	0.001074	0.0511
China	Yuan**	0.095256	0.129643	6.1627
Argentina	Peso	0.237977	0.323887	15.3963
Brazil	Real	0.361414	0.491884	23.3822
Denmark	Kroner	0.134243	0.182705	8.6851
India	Rupee	0.017921	0.024390	1.1594
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214841	0.292398	13.8994
Mexico	New Peso	0.067212	0.091475	4.3484
New Zealand	Dollar	0.544544	0.741125	35.2301
South Africa	Rand	0.104666	0.142450	6.7715
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022057	0.030020	1.4270

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 1, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of April 27, 2007

Share prices end flat

From page B1

"We opened stronger on bargain-hunting interest, which immediately fizzled out as investors decided to lock in profits quickly given the lack of exciting leads," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

"This also reflects cautiousness in the market with the mid-term congressional elections now less than two weeks away," De Leon said.

Filipinos will elect a new batch of 12 senators, more than 200 congressmen and thousands for local government positions during the May 14 polls. *AFP*

P13.7B raised via IPOs, follow-on offers

At least 5 more firms to go public in '07

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PHILIPPINE COMPANIES HAVE generated P13.76 billion in fresh capital from initial public offerings and additional share sales in the first four months of the year.

This accounts for 28 percent of the P48.76 billion in capital raised from IPOs and follow-on offers last year, data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) indicated.

The PSE takes into consideration primary shares in computing capital raised through IPOs and follow-on offerings.

Since 2004, the number of companies seeking public funds to finance their expansion plans has been increasing steadily.

Four companies braved the market last year from a single IPO in 2004 and two IPOs in 2005. For this year, two firms—lottery equipment supplier Pacific Online Systems Corp. (POSC) and National Reinsurance Corp. of the Philippines—have already held their IPOs, generating P105 million and P2.07 billion, respectively, the PSE said.

IPOs peaked in 1994 during an economic boom, lodging 21 companies that went public, raising a total of P36.3 billion. The number dropped slightly to 16 in 1995 and to 13 in 1996. It sharply dwindled to 6 in 1997 at the start of the Asian financial crisis.

This year, at least five companies have announced plans to undertake a maiden offering after the national elections in May. These were: Davao-based oil firm Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.; business process outsourcing firm Intelligent Wave Philippines Inc.; Aboitiz Power Corp.; Golden Arches Development Corp. (GADC), the Philippine master franchise holder of McDonald's; and television giant GMA Network Inc.

A number of companies have also raised new funds from additional share sales this year such as Filinvest Land Inc.(P5.9 billion), and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (P5.7 billion).

"There is a strong demand for IPOs due to high liquidity. The IPO route is a much cheaper way to fund a company's future expansion," Conrado Bate, president of CitisecOnline.Com, which raised P150 million through listing last year.

"It may initially be dilutive to the company's earnings per share but that is just temporary," Bate said.

Operations of SLEX stay under PNCC

By Riza T. Olchondra

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION Corp. said on Wednesday it had obtained temporary authority to continue maintaining and collecting toll fees in the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) even after its congressional franchise to manage the expressway expired on April 30.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, PNCC said it received a Toll Operations Certificate (TOC) from the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) on Monday.

The TOC took effect on May 1. It authorizes the agency to continue operating and maintaining SLEX, which is made up of three segments.

The first is the Skyway system from Quirino in Manila to Alabang just before the viaduct; the second is from the Alabang viaduct to Calamba, Laguna, and the third is the Star system from Sto. Tomas, Batangas to Batangas City.

PNCC's TOC is a relief to SLEX users going through the second segment to reach Filinvest, Laguna and their surrounding areas. Operations for this segment has not been turned over to South Luzon Tollway Corp. (SLTC), PNCC's joint venture with a unit of Malaysia's second-largest toll operator, MTD Capital Berhad.

PNCC spokesperson Madel Tacardon told the INQUIRER that the TOC would remain in effect until the SLEX rehabilitation and construction works in the second segment undertaken by the SLTC is substantially complete.

SLTC spokesperson Daisy Teresita Galang said the entire rehabilitation project was targeted for completion in the last quarter of 2008.

IRRI's rice gene bank gets boost

By Amy R. Remo

THE INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH Institute (IRRI) and Rome-based Global Crop Diversity Trust have entered into a agreement to pool in $600,000 yearly to help protect and manage a rice gene bank, which houses more than 100,000 samples of rice.

Considered as IRRI's 'crown jewels,' the Genetic Resources Center holds the biggest and most important collection of rice.

Located in Laguna, the facility is kept in a special earthquake and fire-proof facility that must be maintained at temperatures as low as -19 degrees Celsius.

For the first time in the history of modern agriculture, a stable and long-term financial support would be given to a collection of rice varieties.

"With almost half the world's population depending on rice, we wanted to make sure IRRI's gene bank was insulated from the whims of fluctuating funding," said Cary Fowler, Global Crop's executive secretary. "The agreement goes to the core of our mission, which is to guarantee the conservation of the world's crop diversity.

"This agreement is probably unique among funding contracts because it has no end date. I am pleased that our first long-term grant protects the crop for the longest term imaginable—forever," added Fowler.

Under the agreement, IRRI has pledged to designate a portion of its financial assets to generate $400,000 to be invested in the gene bank.

This amount in turn, will be matched by Global Crop with $200,000.

The money will be used in acquiring new rice varieties and making sure that storage systems are at par with international standards.

"The rice gene bank is not just a scientific exercise in seed genetics but a major hedge against disaster that ensures farmers throughout the world will always have the rice varieties they need to maintain food security," said Dr. Robert S. Zeigler, IRRI director general.

Today, about three billion people depend on rice for survival.

Vote for Mindanao

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL ELECTION IS LESS than two weeks away. As always and as expected, candidates talk about the Mindanao 'agenda' and the Mindanao 'vote' in their campaign sorties.

It is good to note that since the past few elections, the Mindanao agenda has been brought to the national consciousness. It is no longer an island concern. It is already a national issue.

Our leaders have finally realized there is truth to the statement that "Mindanao is the country's cash cow that gets dog food."

The vast potentials

Mindanao is the Philippines' second largest island, with 34 percent of the country's land mass and 25 percent of its population.

The island enjoys a generally fair tropical climate, because it is situated outside the typhoon belt. It grows most of the Philippines' major crops such as rubber (100 percent of national production), pineapple (91 percent), cacao (90 percent), as well as banana, coffee, corn and coconut.

Mindanao is likewise endowed with rich mineral resources. Its metallic deposits include lead, zinc, ore, iron, copper, chromite, magnetite and gold. Gold mined in Mindanao accounts for nearly half of the national gold reserves. Its non-metallic mineral resources include marble, salt, sand, gravel, silica, clay, and limestone.

It is ironic, however, that Mindanao has always lagged behind the rest of the country economically. Despite its size, vast natural resources, and comparative advantages in agro-industrial development, Mindanao's economy has been moving slow.

Far from leaders' hearts

One of the major factors of the island's weak points is its distance from Manila, the country's capital. Coupled with the lack of infrastructure facilities in many regions, businessmen in Manila found it cheaper to do business with some neighboring countries than with Mindanao.

But more than the physical distance, what hurt Mindanao most was the lack of concern of the country's leaders. The island is not just far from the country's capital, it was far from its leaders' hearts.

Finally given attention

But as reported by the Growth with Equity in Mindanao, the 1990s ushered in a new environment that signaled the start of the island's economic turnaround. The national government shifted to more market-oriented and deregulated national policies, and increased the budget allocation for improving the island's physical and social infrastructure.

A vast improvement in the peace and order situation was brought about by the government's efforts to resolve the Muslim-Christian conflict. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was created in August 1989 to allow Muslims to govern themselves at the regional level. Thereafter, peace and development efforts were intensified.

The confluence of these positive developments created a more viable investment environment in the island.

The Mindanao Economic Development Council was also created aimed at facilitating an integrated island-wide socio-economic development.

Despite these positive developments, there is still a lot more to do for Mindanao. It is true that in terms of budget, the share for Mindanao has posted increases, but this is still insufficient. There is so much catching up to do, after the decades of neglect.

Thus, the Mindanao agenda is even more timely and relevant. And the most important in the agenda is the principle that peace and development in the island are closely intertwined. One cannot exist without the other.

Thus, peace talks with rebel groups must be pursued. That is the only way to attain lasting peace. All-out war policies supposedly to eradicate the rebel groups have been tried. They did not bring peace because peace can be attained only through non-violent means.

More public investments must be poured to build infrastructure facilities and to catalyze private investments as well. When investor's confidence is low because of peace and order perception problems, real or otherwise, it is the government that must remain confident. Public and private investments will generate more jobs, and the people will have an opportunity to improve their quality of lives.

Tri-people of Mindanao

The problem of Mindanao is not as simple as it may appear. It is rooted in history. Thus, leaders must be sensitive to the unique Mindanao culture. The peaceful co-existence of the Moro, lumad, and the Christian settlers is the key to sustainable peace and development.

But is there such thing as a Mindanao vote for those who will champion the Mindanao agenda?

Based on our electoral history, it seems that there is no such thing as a Mindanao vote. If there were a solid Mindanao vote, it would be easy for a Mindanaoan to win a seat in the Senate. It would be even enough to elect a president for that matter.

But must one be a Mindanaoan to push for the Mindanao agenda?

Not really. Of course, the best person to fight for Mindanao in the House of Congress is a true-blooded Mindanaoan who has a deep understanding and strong grasp of the Mindanao problem. However, it does not follow that given a seat in the Senate, a Mindanaoan can or will truly advocate for the Mindanao agenda. And even a non-Mindanaoan can push for the Mindanao agenda if he really understands that the said agenda will benefit the whole country.

It is good to have Mindanaoan leaders elected in the Senate. On May 14, 2007 , there will be four senatorial candidates—Prospero Pichay, Migs Zubiri, Koko Pimentel and Sultan Kiram—who will rely heavily on the support of fellow Mindanaoans. And it is also equally important to have other leaders who have hearts for Mindanao.

Indeed, one need not be a Mindanaoan to push for the Mindanao agenda.

(Joji Ilagan Bian is chair of Joji Ilagan Foundation , Phil. Call Centers Alliance and Mindanao Tech Voc Schools Association. E-mail comments jojibian2@yahoo.com

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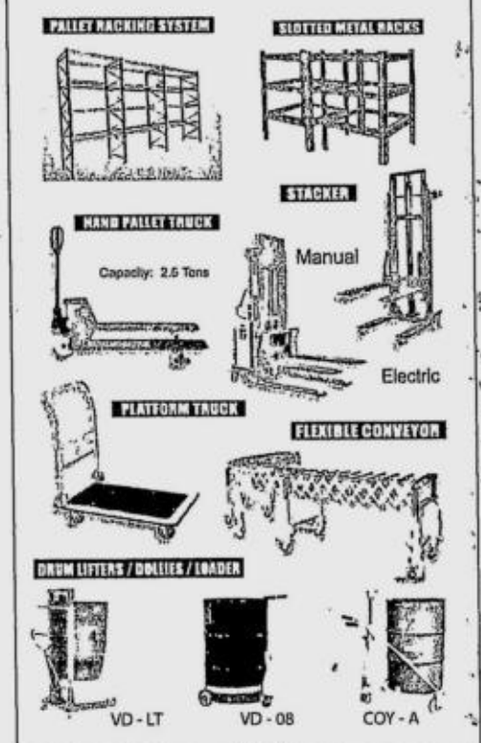

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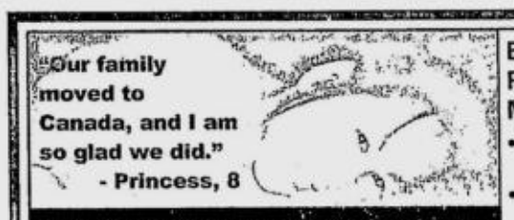
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"FAST FORWARD"
2006 Annual Results Highlights

	2006 Million Pesos	2005 Million Pesos	Changes Percent
Net Income After Tax	**1,057**	718	+47.2
Total Assets	**39,331**	28,298	+39.0
Stockholders' Equity	**8,310**	6,467	+28.5
Return on Equity	**14.3%**	10.4%	+37.5

•First Metro Investment capitalized on historic low interest rates and rising stock prices to fast forward its financial performance in 2006.

•The Treasury Group geared up its government securities trading boosting total assets to Peso 39.3 billion.

•The Investment Banking Group made its mark in arranging major loans for top corporates and at the same time issuing fixed income securities like Tier 2 notes, corporate notes and preferred shares.

•The Investment Advisory Group rode the crest of rising stock prices realizing sizable trading gains and bested all equity funds with its advised fund, First Metro Save & Learn Fund which earned 67% in 2006.

•Cash dividends of Peso 847 million was declared in respect of 2006 operations, the fourth consecutive year of cash dividend payment.

BIR steps up efforts against erring accountants

Cancelation of licenses, filing of charges

By Michelle V. Remo

FLOODED WITH REPORTS ON ALleged malpractices by certain certified public accountants, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said it would intensify efforts to have these erring CPAs sent to jail and their licenses revoked.

Revenue Commissioner José Mario Buñag has directed BIR regional directors, revenue district officers and investigating officers to cancel the accreditation of and file charges against erring CPAs, finance officers and other tax practitioners who connive with corporate taxpayers in evading payment of proper taxes.

The BIR has issued Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 31-2007, reminding the public of the punishment for finance professionals found to be accessories to tax evasion.

The agency said the government had been losing a substantial amount due to tax evasion and under-declaration of income, which were sometimes done with the help of accountants and other finance practitioners.

"Instead of leading taxpayers to pay their obligations properly, they (CPAs) would even manipulate them to pay improperly," Buñag said in a statement.

The BIR fell short of its tax collection target in the first quarter of the year, which internal revenue officers partly blamed on willful under-declaration of income especially by corporate taxpayers.

In the first quarter, the revenue agency turned in only P143.1 billion instead of the P155.2 billion as targeted by the national government for the period.

The shortfall in tax collection was one of the reason the government exceeded its budget deficit ceiling for the first three months of the year. The budget gap during the period hit P52 billion while the ceiling was set at only P45.8 billion.

The BIR said unscrupulous accountants, finance officers and tax practitioners were facing a punishment of two- to six-year imprisonment and a fine of P50,000 to P100,000. CPAs found to be aiding tax evasion will have his or her certificate revoked.

The BIR said unscrupulous acts that were punishable under the Internal Revenue Code include the falsification of financial statements and other audit reports; certification of financial reports that contain misstatement of facts; keeping of more than one book of account; use of fake official receipts, tax credit certificates and other tax-related forms; and offering to sign financial statements without audit.

The BIR said its region 4 office had secured a warrant of arrest against a CPA who was found to have issued a false audit report in favor of a corporate client.

NOTHING gets in the way of DHL Philippines when delivering relief goods to disaster-hit areas.

DHL takes on another task

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

DELIVERY AND LOGISTICS COMPANY DHL Philippines promises to go all the way for its customers, that neither hell nor high water will get in the way of its commitment to deliver packages and cargo entrusted to its care.

Starting November last year, DHL Philippines has extended its commitment to cover the delivery of emergency supplies to areas in the Philippines ravaged by disasters, such as typhoons and earthquakes, as part of its avowed service to the community.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

DHL president Larry Llamzon said the move in the Philippines was spurred by DHL Asia-Pacific's experience during the December 2004 tsunami that devastated parts of Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Delivering help

At that time, DHL stepped in and delivered much-needed relief supplies to the people hit hard by nature's wrath as a way of reaching out to the communities it serves.

DHL was among the first companies to respond to the tragedy. It mobilized its resources in transportation and logistics to deliver relief materials, cash contributions and relief items to disaster-hit areas within 24 hours.

DHL units across the region contributed as much as $250,000 to fund the construction of school buildings, houses and other critical infrastructure as part of the long-term rehabilitation program to help the tsunami victims.

Realizing that the Philippines will always have its share of disasters, since the country is in the typhoon path and is also prone to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, DHL in the Philippines decided to set up a similar disaster response system in the country.

Llamzon said DHL had reached out to the National Disaster Coordinating Council and discussed how the company could participate on the logistics side of disaster response. It was fortunate that DHL and the NDCC got together at that time because it enabled them to help Bicol when Supertyphoon Reming hit the area.

There were kinks in the system, as can be expected of a venture just getting off the ground, but Llamzon said DHL was still able to bring relief goods from Manila to Albay, and from Albay to Catanduanes.

Disaster response

"We also helped the government supervise the airport operations in Legazpi, Albay," he added.

"At that time, what was urgently needed was help in bringing relief goods to Albay and in organizing the distribution."

DHL Philippines called in experts from the region to help, as well as volunteers from the Manila office.

"We already have specialists in the region who know what to do during disasters," Llamzon said, "they know the importance of handling the volume of the goods and ensuring speed of delivery."

Lessons learned

DHL carefully studied its actions following the tsunami and it seeks to apply the lessons learned from this experience by assisting governments, aid agencies and companies in improving the delivery of goods and services as part of disaster response.

Llamzon noted that in the Philippines, the NDCC and local government personnel knew what to do during disasters, thus DHL just stepped in to help in the delivery of goods and coordinate the relief efforts.

He says he expects DHL to further improve on its coordination with NDCC, which will come in handy when disaster strikes again.

FDC posts 21% profit increase

FILINVEST DEVELOPMENT CORP. (FDC) SAID its net profit rose 21 percent to P1.43 billion in 2006 from P1.18 billion in 2005, mainly due to the strong performance of its real estate operations.

In a report to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FDC said real estate operations grew 19 percent to P4.7 billion last year, from P3.9 billion in 2005.

Sale of lots, condominium and residential units and club shares grew 14 percent collectively to P3.25 billion last year from P2.85 billion.

In the leasing sector, mall and rental revenues accounted for 21 percent of the total net revenue and posted 26-percent growth to P1.25 billion last year.

In the office sector, Filinvest Alabang Corp. maintained its 100-percent occupancy levels while rental rates grew 20 percent due to stronger demand for business process outsourcing or contact center locations.

Real estate operating expenses grew 10 percent due to higher selling and marketing expenses.

Net revenue from banking operations was steady in 2006 at P1.3 billion. Interest income slightly declined due to lower interest rates. FDC is the listed holding company of the Filinvest Group of Companies. It derives income from its stakes in Filinvest Land Inc., Filinvest Alabang Inc., Festival Supermall Inc., Cyberzone Properties Inc., Filinvest Asia Corp., and East West Banking Corp. *Elizabeth S. Lacson*

Biodiesel ... From page B1

fuel with even just one-percent CME mix reduces harmful emissions by anywhere from 44 percent to 77 percent.

"The black smoke you see from diesel engines is unburned fuel," Lao said. "Our product helps the engine burn the fuel better, thus reducing these emissions."

Many skeptics find themselves shaking their heads on Chemrez's optimism, given the country's track record on environmental issues.

For one, the Clean Air Act—which the Biofuels Law dovetails nicely into, at least in theory—has been in force for eight years already. Needless to say, a cursory glance at Metro Manila's major thoroughfares will show that compliance has been spotty, at best.

So if tugging at motorists' consciences is not that successful, Chemrez is also hoping that motorists would feel the monetary upside of biodiesel use over the long run.

A study conducted using government vehicles showed that mixing one-percent BioActiv—Chemrez' flagship product—with diesel fuel could result in increased mileage efficiency of up to 41 percent for a diesel-engined van and a 29-percent reduction in fuel consumption.

Another test vehicle used in the study, a bus plying provincial routes, showed annual fuel savings of up to P242,000 a year, or about P36 million for a transport company operating a 150-unit bus fleet.

Company officials are hesitant, however, to crow about the economic benefits to motorists that biodiesel use would bring, saying that laying out such statistics will leave them open to attack by skeptics.

It is a potential weakness that biodiesel's opponents are keen to pounce on, even as they publicly profess grudging compliance with the new law.

According to recent reports, pump prices may rise by anywhere from P0.30 to P0.50 a liter when the law comes into effect on Sunday, mainly because oil firms would merely pass on the added cost to biodiesel to motorists.

Tricky start

The high price of crude oil in the international market continues to play in favor of alternative fuels, while the ready supply of raw material from the local coconut industry further buttresses Chemrez's position.

The only thing the company is worried about is not the growing proliferation of small-scale biodiesel firms which are basically backyard operations.

"We are worried about firms selling 'off-spec' products to oil firms," said Alvin Lao, chief financial officer of Chemrez's parent firm.

Given the still-high level of skepticism toward biodiesel, problems with fly-by-night producers could give the fledgling business a mortal black eye.

"If that happens, the industry could get a bad reputation," he said.

As far as regulators are concerned, there is no stopping the Biofuels Act, despite last-minute lobbying by large petroleum firms Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and the local unit of Chevron.

"This is the law, so they just have to comply," Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla said in an interview. "They have to make adjustments."

According to the Department of Energy, using one percent biodiesel starting this year, and eventually 5 percent bioethanol, will save the country at least $167 million annually in precious foreign exchange. By 2010, the higher mix—if it is implemented—will save the country $389 million annually.

"It is a modest start, but it's a good start," Lotilla said.

The country has been flirting with coco biodiesel since the oil shocks of the 1970s. A government study made on that experiment in the early 1980s concluded that such alternative fuels were uneconomical to use and produce at that time.

Ultimately, only consumers—not regulators and lawmakers—will decide the fate of biofuels.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
UNITED PHILIPPINES DRILLING CO., INC. Unit 818 Pioneer Highlands South Cond., Pioneer cor. Madison Sts., Mandaluyong City	Troy Robert Howard Folie	Mechanical Superintendent
SHARP (PHILS.) CORPORATION Km. 23 West Service Rd., South Super Highway, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Kenji Okunaka	President and General Manager
INGASCO, INCORPORATED W-813 PSEC, Exchange Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hiroshi Nagae	President and Chief Executive Officer
MANILA PENINSULA HOTEL, INC. cor. of Ayala and Makati Aves., Makati City	Adam Kenneth Mathis	Executive Chef
MAERSK-FILIPINAS INC. 51/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave. cor. Rufino St., Makati City	Jesper Dalgaard Larsen	Managing Director
SUNNY VALE CORP. Unit 609, 282 Dona Henerosa Bldg., EDSA Extension, Pasay City	Soon Nam Kim (w/o LEE)	General Manager
PHILIPPINES MANAGEMENT SERVICE LTD. (PHILMAN) CORP. Globe Telecom Bldg., Rm. 6-A Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City	Sungkyun Woo	General Manager
ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY Loyola Heights, Quezon City	Hyonyoung Choi	Visiting Researcher
ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY Loyola Heights, Quezon City	Sunggi Min	Visiting Researcher
ASSAD RENT - A - CAR CORP. 114-D Dona Soledad Ave., Better Living Subd., Paranaque City	Monther As'ad Tawfiq Qwaider	Asst. Manager
REAL COOL TRADING CO. INC. Pas. I-A3 Galleria Shopping Center, Taft Ave., Pasay City	Lingling Cai	Sales Manager
SOJITZ PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 24/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave., cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Masaharu Tamaki	Advisor
KEYLARGO PHIL., INC. 1335 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City	Kuo-Hua Lai	Consultant for Business Management
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & INNOVATION CONSULTING, INC. 10/F IBM Plaza Bldg., Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City	David Lee Castetter	Corporate Business Trainer
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK 2/F PNB Financial Centre, Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Blvd., 1300 Pasay City	Siddhartha Chauhan	Technical Specialist
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK 2/F PNB Financial Centre, Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Blvd., 1300 Pasay City	Sumesh Manchanda	Functional Consultant
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK 2/F PNB Financial Centre, Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Blvd., 1300 Pasay City	Sangram Dilip Mhatre	Technical Specialist
EDUCATION E-LAMP, INC. 2904 C West Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hyungchun Kim	General Manager
XP MEDIA ASIA PACIFIC LIMITED CORPORATION 2402 D PSE Bldg., Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Youn Ja Shim (w/o PARK)	Marketing Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

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(PDI–May 3, 2007)

CAGELCO II

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the following:

1. **Supply and Installation of 5 MVA Outdoor Power Transformer** for our Casambalangan Sub-Station at Sta. Ana, Cagayan. The Power Transformer must be rated 5 MVA, 3-Phase, HV-67kV / LV-13.8kV, 60Hz, ONAN Cooling, Off-Circuit Tap Changer, Dyn 1 Connection and Drying process shall use Vapour Phase System.
2. **Supply and Delivery of Wood Poles** for distribution and sub-transmission line.

To be qualified, bidder must have fully complied with the following:

1. Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Committee Chairman, Clarence E. Jacinto)
   a. Company Profile
   b. Business Registration
   c. Business Permit
   d. BIR/VAT Certificate
   e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
   f. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years
   g. Financial Statement
   h. Compliance with the must technical specifications
2. Must be able to pay P5,000.00 for Item #1 and P2,000.00 for Item #2 for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accepts proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Pre-bid conference and bidding schedules shall be informed to all qualified bidders through fax and mails.

Deadline for submission of requirements – May 16, 2007.

(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. TORDESILLAS
General Manager

CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Macanaya District, Aparri, Cagayan
Tel. No. (078) 888-2173 • Telefax No. (078) 822-0900
E-mail: cagelco2main@digitelone.com

(PDI – May 3 & 4, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO RE-BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders for the re-bid of the following:

	ABC
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Drugs and Medicines	8,765,906.00
Laboratory Supplies	1,909,089.00

Bid documents may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office. For details, please contact telephone no. 735-7144

Schedule of Activities:

	Pre-bid Conference	Opening of Bids	Venue
Medical Supplies	May 10, 2007, 2:00 p.m., Reception Rm	May 22, 2007, 9:00 a.m.	Dining Hall
Drugs and Medicines	May 11, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	May 25, 2007, 9:00 a.m.	Reception Room
Laboratory Supplies	May 11, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	May 25, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	Reception Room

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality found therein and to accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **ELISEA S. MARQUEZ, M.D., D.P.B.A**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–May 3, 2007)

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Corinthians 5:4-5

DR. ARTURO G. CALUAG

Joined our Creator last April 30, 2007.

He is survived by his wife, **LOURDES PASCUAL CALUAG.**

His body lies in state at Funeraria Villa, Gen. Santos City.

Interment will be tomorrow May 4, 2007, 1:00 pm at San Carlos Cemetery, General Santos City.

Our Beloved Mama & Grandma

TAN SIO Vda. de CO LAO

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 1, 2007 at the age of 91.

Her bereaved children: **Roman & Jovita (†), Alfredo & Salvacion, Jesus & Cherrie, Vicente (†) & Juanita (†), Quirino & Jocelyn, John & Anning, Tolentino & Cheng Ping, Felisa & Luis, Lydia & Quintin, Lolita, Baby Natividad (†),** and **Estelita & Benny;** her grandchildren; great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Chapel-J, La Funeraria Paz, Inc. at G. Araneta Ave., Q.C.

Her remains will be transferred to Binalonan, Pangasinan on Friday, May 4, 2007 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 6, 2007 after the 6:30 a.m. Mass at Binalonan Municipal Cemetery.

NELSON ODOY SEÑA

Peacefully joined our Lord on April 30, 2007 at the age of 59.

His loving wife, **Carmen**; children **Marilyn & Willy, Tess & Dodjie, Nestor & Yeyeth** and grandchildren; mother **Cristina**; brothers **Ernie** and **Ed**; sisters **Lulu, Thelma** and **Bani**, and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Prudential Memorial Chapel, 1125-31 A. Maceda St., Sampaloc, Manila.

Cremation will be held on May 6, 2007 at 9:00 p.m. at the Chinese Crematorium.

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NOTICE OF VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION
Please be informed that the corporate life of **5 Cubic Level Corporation** has been shortened via an Amended Articles of Incorporation acknowledged before Notary Public Donald V. Diaz on March 29, 2007, Doc No.: 038, Page No.: 008, Book No.: 001, Series of 2007.
(PDI – Apr. 19, 26 & May 3, 2007)

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People, Events & Products

Marikina-MWC tie-up cited

MARIKINA CITY MAY SOON realize its vision of having a stable supply of potable water for every household, as well as clean river where fish will thrive and children can freely swim without fear of getting sick due to pollution.

Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando hinted that such ideal scenario is about to materialize through the city government's partnership with the Ayala-led Manila Water Company which is currently undertaking massive pipe-laying operations which has covered about 100 percent of the city's more than 115,000 households.

"The partnership has worked very well. I think it is very effective," the mayor said in an interview. "In return, Manila Water has tried to connect water pipes to as many households, and as quickly as possible. Most of the households in Marikina are now enjoying stable supply of tap water," Fernando said.

Underscoring the relevance of Manila Water's role, Fernando said water supply is a "very important basic service that the people need." She said people who lack continuous supply of safe and clean water generally become less productive as they are more preoccupied with fetching water or interminably discussing water issues with friends and neighbors.

"If we remove these distractions and irritations that make life more stressful for the people, they can have a better quality of life," the local chief executive pointed out.

Fernando also noted that the collaboration has enabled Manila Water to dramatically reduce system losses in the city, partly owing to the vigilance of the people themselves who immediately report illegal connections and leakages to the authorities.

In the same interview, the mayor said another major thrust of her administration is public sanitation and environment protection.

"We have been discussing with them (Manila Water officials) about locations where they can set up wastewater treatment facilities," she said. "I hope Manila Water can put up at least four or five water treatment facilities (in Marikina)." Thus far, two sites have been identified-the market area along Wenceslao Paz Street in Barangay Sta. Elena and the Olandes area.

Fernando noted that water in the city's creeks and rivers have turned brackish due to untreated wastewater coming from the sewers and upland areas, particularly Antipolo City.

Meanwhile, free desludging of household septic tanks, complemented by an intensive information and education campaign, was being implemented.

Fernando warned that "more stringent inspections" would be conducted by local sanitation authorities in the future to strengthen their sanitation and cleanliness drive.

"There will also be a city ordinance or a septage management program soon to support the advocacy of Manila Water," said City Environment Officer Gloria Buenaventura.

MOU FOR BIG TICKET PROJECT SIGNED

Shanghai-based Shimao Property Holdings Ltd led by chair Hui Wing Mau (left) shakes hands with Bases Conversion and Development Authority Chair Aloysius R. Santos at the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the joint development of a big portion of land in Bonifacio Global City. Leading the signatories are Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila (back row, right) and BCDA President and CEO Narciso Abaya (second from right). Among witnesses are Special Envoy to the People's Republic of China Carlos Chan, BCDA Executive Vice President Isaac S. Puno III (back row, left), Ms Hui (3rd from left) and representatives from the Shimao Group. Shimao, the biggest conglomerate for land development in Hong Kong, always maintains an inventory of more than 20 million sqm of luxury offices and residential condominiums. Santos attributed the investment decision of the Shimao Group to the favorable investment climate.

Foreign firms upbeat on RP's CER program

EUROPEAN- AND US-BASED COMpanies are interested to tap the Philippines' first private sector-led agro-forestry-based carbon emission reduction (CER) program under the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC).

According to Ralph Lopez, president and CEO of Good Harvest Agro-Resources and Trading Corp, he is meeting with an initial group of top executives of American and European companies that want to reduce their carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by tapping the company's agro-forestry CER program for their carbon credits requirements under the clean development mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol.

Lopez said the US and European companies will be briefed on Good Harvest's agro-forestry CER model which integrates the planting of export-variety GH mango trees and high-value or indigenous forest trees with the participation of non-government organizations (NGOs), cooperatives and local communities.

"Good Harvest's agro-forestry CER model, now based in its pilot project site in Bagac, Bataan, provides program partners with a long-term revenue source that rewards them financially while allowing them to meet their GHG emissions ceilings. As the country's first professionally and scientifically managed mango farming company and services provider, Good Harvest's goal is to initially plant 1 million mango trees together with 10 million high-value and indigenous forest trees for both bio-security and bio-diversity purposes and in pursuit of its agro-forestry program," Lopez said.

"Good Harvest's cash crop for the program, its export-variety mango trees, has the highest income-per-fruit ratio and starts to bear fruit after the fifth year providing revenue sources during their productive years of up to a century. More important, they need not be cut down during that period. Thus, our agro-forestry CER program is a better solution as it provides a longer-lasting return as it attains the requirement for permanence imposed by CDM registering organizations. This assures carbon credit buyers that our program is sustainable as envisioned by the Kyoto Protocol," Lopez stressed.

Lopez explained that the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC is an international treaty negotiated in Kyoto, Japan in 1997 under which industrialized countries committed to reduce their collective GHG emissions by 5.2 percent for the period 2008 to 2012 compared to 1990 levels.

MFI ISO RE-CERTIFIED

MFI Foundation Inc (formerly Meralco Foundation Inc) is awarded the ISO 9001:200 Re-Certification for its quality management systems recently. Shown is MFI President Col. Alex T. Escaño (4th from left, 1st row) being congratulated by AJA Registrars Inc general manager Paul Bagatsing in the presence of MFI executives (1st row from left) Vladimr H. Santos, head, electrical department; Manolo S. Santos, head, MFI Technological Institute; Bagatsing, Escaño, Antonio Kosca, MFI COO and Leo Felipe, assistant to the president. Also shown are MFI's other department heads and ISO Audit team. MFI was first granted the ISO 9001:200 in 2004 and the Re-Certification was released Jan. 26, 2006 by AJA Auditors.

CENTRALBOOKS OPENS LATEST BRANCH IN SM MEGAMALL

Lawbook publisher Centralbooks opened recently its latest branch at the 5th level, Building A in SM Megamall, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. The newest store offers various services such as the latest on entrepreneurial publishing, the Publish on Demand technology, the latest state-of-the-art technology and the first of its kind in the country in book printing which makes possible the easy printing of digital files and manuscripts to a complete, professional perfect-bound book in a matter of minutes regardless of copies; and, the Legal Information Center which could be reached at 638-1088; 0917-8834772; e-mail at central_bks@yahoo.com. The SM Megamall branch also offers wholesale and retail of legal publications. Guests of honor at the store's formal opening include (from left) Jose Paolo M. Sibal, Central Books vice-president for Admin/Finance and president, Philippine Bookseekers Association inc (PBAI); Dennis Gonzalez, chair-National Books Development Board (NBDB); lawyer Midas P. Marquez, Chief of Staff - Office of Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno; lawyer Jose Agaton R. Sibal, president/CEO - Central Books/Printing Industries Association of the Philippines (PIAP); and Juan Carlos Sibal, vice-president for operations.

The latest in bone cancer treatment

THE MEDICAL CITY CANCER CENTER-MUSCULOSKELETAL Unit, in cooperation with the Philippine Musculoskeletal Tumor Society, will be hosting a conference titled "Limb Salvage for Bone Tumor, Principles and Practice." This is one of the bi-monthly grand tumor conferences organized by the hospital. The Medical City is inviting interested medical doctors to come and participate in the event on May 4 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at The Medical City's conference rooms. The speakers are leaders in the field of orthopedic oncology, namely Cesar L. Dimayuga, MD, FPOA; and Rafael S. Claudio, MD, FPOA. A multi-disciplinary panel of cancer experts will serve as lecture reactors. Registration is free. For details, call The Cancer Center at 635-6789 loc 6506 or 6307 (look for Anna Gonzales).

Earn from the property bull market

WITH MONEY MARKET INTEREST RATES AT THEIR LOWEST levels, it is only a matter of time before the property sector experiences what is perhaps one of its longest bull runs. To help you take advantage of this wave, a group of investment and property market experts is holding a seminar titled "Opportunities in Foreclosures and REITs: How to Best Prepare for the Property Bull Market" on May 3, Thursday, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Bahia Function Room of the InterContinental Manila. The seminar is a joint effort of the Property Forum Philippines (TPFP), the leading property auctioneer in the Philippines, and P&A, one of the country's leading accounting, tax and business advisory firms. To inquire, call P&A at 886-5511 and look for Rosanna Ricafort (loc. 536), Melissa Valledor (loc. 522) or Arianne Galpo (loc. 657).

BUSINESS

WWF renews call for passage of renewable energy bill

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SUPPLY INTERRUPtions due to temperature spikes will persist if Congress fails to pass the renewable energy bill during its special session on June 4-8.

According to environmental group Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), "oppressively high daytime temperatures" would eventually become the norm if the country kept up its heavy reliance on fossil fuels.

Burning of fossil fuels produces carbon dioxide, which causes global warming and climate change.

"Our thirst for more electricity results in the burning of more fossil fuels such as coal and oil, which produce carbon dioxide—the greenhouse gas most responsible for global warming," said Rean Tirol, WWF-Philippines climate change manager.

"This has a direct and adverse impact on our environment, which we are now experiencing in the form of heat waves and super-typhoons," Tirol added.

Data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration revealed that there had been an "alarming" increase in typhoon strength over the last four years.

Last year alone, the country was hit by several super typhoons, including Milenyo and Reming.

"But we are not totally helpless because there is something we can do to mitigate the effects of global warming—that is to drastically cut our dependence on fossil fuels such as coal and oil. That is why we are calling on our senators to pass the renewable energy bill into law," Tirol said.

The House of Representatives' version of the bill passed in September last year, while the Senate Committee on Energy, after filing its committee report, had recommended its passage on Dec. 20, 2006.

Some of the incentives included in the bill are exemptions from tariff duties and zero-rated value-added tax for the importation of machinery and equipment for the first 10 years of an operating contract, as well as tax credit on domestic capital equipment and services.

Foreigners snap up RP condotels

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOWER PRICES AND RETIREES' SPENDING money are directing foreign attention to residential condominium hotels in the Philippines, which in turn is driving up more construction, according to a web-based marketing firm.

Beth Collingz, director of PLC International Marketing Networks, said her company had been very busy catering to buyers from the United Kingdom and Australia who were interested in investment properties as well as holiday homes here.

"A lot of this interest is being driven by the relatively cheap market prices here compared to Europe—especially UK housing prices—and the easy payment options available for condominium hotel developments," Collingz said.

She added that offshore property investors, foreign baby boomers as well as overseas Filipinos were looking for ways to maximize their return on investments as they approach retirement.

Construction firms cashing in on trend

"And so they are purchasing second homes, particularly condotels, which they can use the condo for vacations and rent it out when they are not using the unit," said Collingz, who runs the Internet-based PLC Global Pinoy marketing network.

"(These buyers) gain rental incomes that on today's purchase prices give a projected ROI of some 12 percent to 16 percent depending on the mode of payment for the unit," she said.

Collingz's firm is in partnership with Pacific Concord Properties Inc., which has market-ready projects in Metro Manila and Cebu under the brand Lancaster Suites, with more being built in other locations.

She said that condotels were gaining a following because, in Pacific Concord's case, the owners can make the condos available for short-term rentals when they are away.

Collingz said at least 85 percent of PLC Global Pinoy's condotel sales in the Philippines were to international clients.

"While such a level of foreign-purchasing activity is not as high in the Philippines provinces, Cebu in particular, has seen a sharp increase in real estate purchases by international buyers in the past several years," she said.

Collingz said the foreign buyers were aware that it was a buyer's market in the Philippines right now—with many properties available and fewer local buyers.

PLDT joins $500-M Asia-US cable project

By Riza T. Olchondra

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Co. said yesterday it would help establish a $500-million cable system directly connecting Southeast Asia to the United States.

The 20,000-km long underwater telecom highway called the Asia-America Gateway (AAG) Cable System will connect Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Hong Kong SAR, Philippines, Guam, Hawaii and the US West Coast.

The cable system will also be connected to other major cable systems connecting Europe, Australia, other parts of Asia and Africa.

The AAG will be built with the help of industry leaders, such as AT&T Inc., Bharti, BT Global Network Services, CAT Telecom, ETPI, PCP Company Limited, PT Indosat, Saigon Postel Corporation, StarHub, Telekom Malaysia, Telkom Indonesia, Telstra, the government of Brunei Darussalam, TNZL, Viettel and VNPT.

PLDT said AAG is expected to carry commercial traffic by the fourth quarter of 2008, by which time it would have been connected to PLDT's network.

When completed, the system can handle 1.92 terabits of data a second using the Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) technology that manages Internet and multimedia transmissions.

"The first direct terabit-scale submarine cable network between Southeast Asia and North America is a historic landmark in the development of telecommunications between the two regions," PLDT said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

PLDT said the proposed cable system would meet the projected growth in bandwidth requirements for new and revolutionary broadband applications such as IP, video, data and other multimedia services.

The AAG is expected to carry 130,000 simultaneous High Definition Television (HDTV) signals.

Philnico welcomes new offer for Nonoc

PHILNICO INDUSTRIAL CORPOration has welcomed the offer of China's Jinchuan Group Ltd. to improve on its previous proposal to invest $1 billion in the rehabilitation of the Nonoc nickel mines in Surigao del Norte.

Philnico president Evaristo M. Narvaez Jr. said in a statement yesterday that the renewed interest of Jinchuan bodes well for all the stakeholders of the nickel project, since Philnico would be able to select the best offer.

"We hope that this development would be favorable for the country, in particular the national government, which is keen on restarting commercial operation of the Nonoc nickel project by 2009," said Narvaez.

Exclusive negotiations between Philnico and Jinchuan were said to have collapsed because the prospective Chinese investor insisted on doing another feasibility study.

Narvaez earlier said that this study would push back the project's launch by six to 12 months without any assurance of a definitive agreement.

Narvaez noted that when Jinchuan officially terminated negotiations, Philnico had received offers from other major investors from Russia, Japan, Canada and other Chinese mining companies, all of which were in the advanced stages of due diligence work on the project.

"Thus, in fairness to all parties, Jinchuan's offer will be evaluated on the same footing with other ongoing offers to Philnico," he said.

The main questions, according to Philnico, would be who is capable and who can get Nonoc mines operational by 2009 or 2010.

Philnico is 55-percent owned by Hong-Kong based Compline Resources Co., about 30 percent by Australia's Pacific Energy Ltd., and the rest by local investors.

Amy R. Remo

Kalinga's unoy rice soon to hit Europe

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TABUK, KALINGA—THE province's native unoy rice is expected to soon hit Europe after a private foundation based in Tuscany, Italy, expressed interest in marketing the native rice variety to European outlets, said Mayor Camilo Lammawin Jr.

"This is a breakthrough development for us. People know that Kalinga's unoy, aside from Ifugao's tinawon rice, is now being exported to the United States. Now, we have Europe as a likely market," Lammawin said.

The Revitalized Indigenous Cordilleran Entrepreneurs (Rice), a nongovernment organization, started exporting unoy to Montana in the United States in 2005.

The Kalinga Organic Unoy Rice Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative Inc., a farmers' cooperative based in this capital town, supplies the unoy to markets abroad.

The cooperative's 200 members have been tasked to harvest 25 kg each to meet the 5,025-kg quota for shipment every year, Lammawin said.

Felicitas Balmores, agricultural technician and coordinator of the unoy rice program, said members of the Italy-based Slow Food Foundation for Diversity, an organization committed to the preservation of traditional food, encouraged unoy farmers to register the product through their foundation so this could be better marketed.

The foundation has been helping producers of the traditional food by promoting these products, setting quality standards and ensuring its market, Balmores said.

The town has established its unoy rice demonstration farm in the upland village of Agbannawag to boost local harvest, she said.

Unoy, the upland rice grown on rice terraces in Kalinga, is dependent on rainfall so farmers have limited harvests, Balmores said.

"The unoy rice is organically grown, which means it is free from synthetic chemicals. Farmers in the villages do not use pesticides or inorganic fertilizers," she said.

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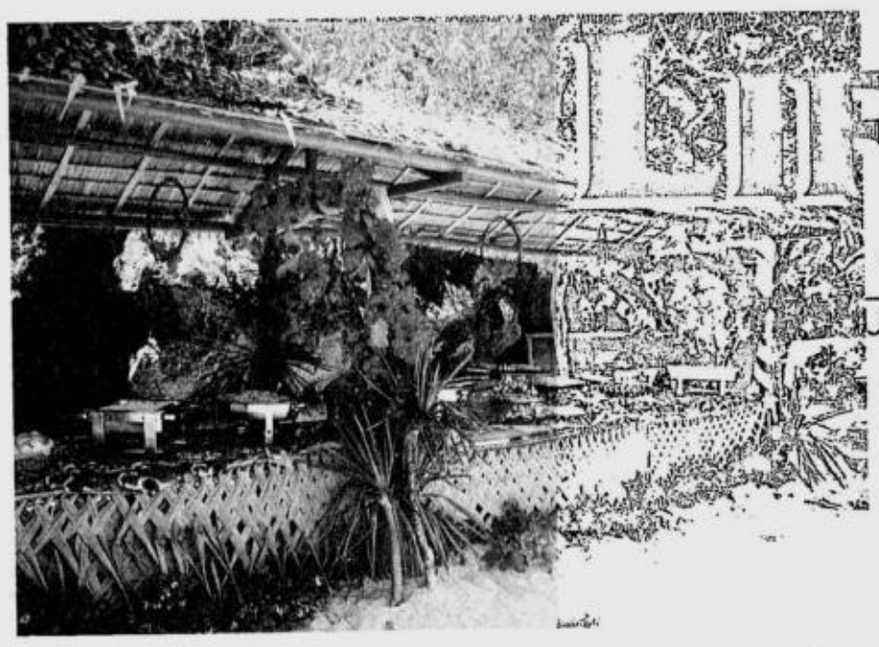

LUNCH buffet at the beach; fish egg (*bihod*) pate (right)

Club Noah always served seafood; how ironic it would be to be on an island and seafood is not on the menu

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

A piece of heaven

BEFORE PROCEEDING TO CLUB NOAH Isabelle, our final destination, we waited for the SeAir plane we took to Taytay, Palawan to leave. Only then would our guides tell us about the layout of the island resort, take us by jeepney to the mangrove swamp where a boat waited to bring us to our piece of heaven for the next few days.

My idea of heaven is doing nothing. Being a beach person, I can look out to the sea for hours, taking a dip once in a while to feel invigorated. How wonderful not to have to go far into the sea to see the fish!

At Club Noah, so many fish are at the pier, swimming with you and waiting for breadcrumbs.

I would have been content to eat in the same place where we had our breakfast buffet daily. But the staff decided to do something more. I suppose being on an island without a town to go to, one must create some variety.

For the duration of our stay, we had lunch and dinner in different places. One evening, dining was on one end of the island. Another evening we were in a garden near the dining room.

Singing, dancing staff

And all evenings the staff was either singing or dancing, entertainers as well as efficient waiters, cooks, facilitators and divers.

We found it amusing in the morning to look at them and remember how the evening before one waiter tried to climb a bamboo pole for the *palo sebo* game or that the front desk clerk was a Muslim princess.

Lunch one day involved a short *banca* ride. The more athletic trekked through the island's coast to reach a place that looked liked it was a set for the "Blue Hawaii" movie.

The buffet table had the right atmosphere with bougainvillea flowers, sarong tablecloths and coconut leaves roofing. Seafood was grilled but there were also prepared fried shrimps in batter (*nilasing na hipon*), fish *kinilaw*, green mangoes and *bagoong* and some salad greens. And there was kimchi for the omnipresent Korean tourists.

We lunched under huge trees, their leaves protecting us from the noonday heat. Birds flew by and swooped down but not on our food, thankfully. While others repaired to their cabanas on stilts for some shuteye, some of us waited for the right time to go snorkeling, hovering gingerly over sea urchins clinging to rocks, their black spines sticking out protectively.

Perhaps the best lunch adventure happened the next day. Right after breakfast, we took a banca to our next surprise dining area.

Birds' nest

It was on one of those islands with limestone cliffs, one of several sites where the famous *nido* or birds' nest is harvested.

We were told that in Palawan, it was easy for owners to control the harvesting of birds' nests. First of all, there is heavy security at every site and the amount of harvest has already been ascertained.

If the harvest is less than expected, owners can assume that the harvesters have sold some birds' nests on their own.

Though we did not have *nido* that day, it did not lessen our pleasure. First of all, we had time to sample the natural pool inside one of the caves, swimming between stalagmites and admiring the stalactites above.

After that, we were led into a cave that the staff lit with what seemed like a hundred candles. It could be a perfect dining place for a Valentine date. But that day, the outside was better.

Tables and chairs brought from the resort were set up on the narrow shore. Smoke and music emanated from inside the cave. The smoke was from the grill where fresh fish and meat were being cooked. The music was from a band brought along for our dining pleasure. The same band also provided accompaniment for those who dared to sing.

But it was the chef who gave a command performance that day. Chef Booj Supe was prevailed upon to sing while we relaxed after our filling lunch. It was not my first time to hear the young chef perform. He did the same

A PIECE/ C3

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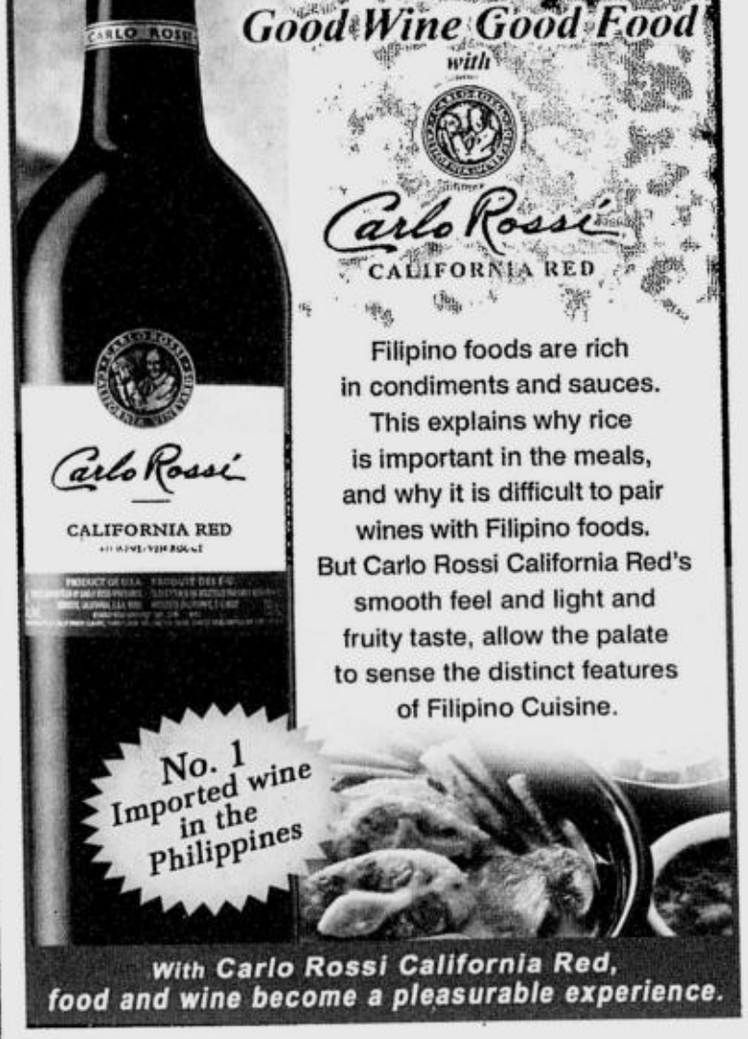
Chinese Cooking: May 12 (Sat) 2-6 p.m. Pata Tim, Siomai, Kekiam, Chinese Fresh Lumpia, Pork Spareribs with Blackbeans, Almond Jello. P900.
Coffee 101 (Barista Class): May 19 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Coverage: Coffee History, Coffee Process, Trouble shooting, Machine know-how, proper grinding. Techniques to perfect froth. Actual preparation of popular Traditional Hot Coffee Concoction: Espresso, Cappuccino, Latte, etc.; Cold Coffee Concoctions and Spins. P1,500.
Kakanin: May 26 (Sat) 2-6 p.m. Cassava Cake, Pichi Pichi, Cuchinta, Maja Nangka, Putong Puti, Bibingkang Malagkit & Homemade Salabat. P800.

CERTIFICATE COURSES FOR ADULTS (Limited enrollment, pre-registration required)

Fundamentals of Bakery Production: May 8-11/22-25 (T-F) 2 - 6 p.m. Basic & commercial baking techniques applicable to the use of various ready mixes, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies & cakes includes theory practice for Commercial Scale Productions with Free Baking Cookbook. P5,000
Junior Culinary Workshop: (JCW) for Kids; Ages 6-10; May 9 & 11 (W & F) 9 a.m.-12nn. DAY 1 - Mighty Burger, Power Rice, Strawberry Soda, Fruitty Waffles ACTIVITY 1 - Hand Molded Alphabet Cookies, DAY 2 - Orange Frostee, Savory Chicken Boat, Kiddie Spaghetti, Waffle Dog, ACTIVITY 2 - Edible Candy Clay. Fee: P2,000.
Catering Seminar: May 15-17 (T-Th) 3-6 p.m. Legal and technical aspect to get started in Catering Business, Facilities, Personnel, Menu including portioning & quantification. Actual cooking of International Cocktail Menu & Fruit Punch, Special Dessert with Free Catering cookbook. P3,000.
Basic Culinary: May 15-18/May 29-June 1 (T-F) 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation & safety; nutrition & nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs & spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing & boning poultry, filleting fish & meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry & meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. P6,000.
Young People's Cook-In: (YPCI) for Teens; 13 yrs. old and up; May 23, 24 & 25 (W,TH,F) 9 a.m.-1p.m. DAY 1 - E C Short Ribs, Super Slaw, Trud Rice balls, Mango Cobbler, Homemade Peach Lemonade on Sugared Glasses, Apple pie w/ Streussel Topping DAY 2 - Chicken on Pita Pockets, 5-star Caesar Salad, Fortune Cookies, Marbled Cheesecake/Two-way California Sushi-Maki DAY 3 - Quickie Quesadillas, Tuna Gratin, Turtle Pie, Strawberry Parfait. Fee: P3,000.

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108; or e-mail us at *mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph*



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LEGASPI: Lani / Anette 893 8935
MALATE: Yvette / Gein 525 98 91 / 0921 466 94 23
MEGAMALL: Bianca / Mariel 637 75 43 / 0916 247 97 53
PASAY ROAD: Kathy 887 35 30 / 0915 689 30 88
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THE COLLECTIBLE tea cups are the perfect gift for all occasions.

T SALON offers loose tea leaves in various flavors.

Ultimate tea experience

THE T SALON AND EMPORIUM TIES up with fine china brand Royal Doulton to give tea aficionados a taste of the ultimate tea experience offered at its shop on the second floor of the Glorietta Center in Makati City.

Any purchase from Royal Doulton's collectible tea items entitles the buyer to a pack of loose tea leaves from T Salon and Emporium. This special gift, which is offered till supply lasts, can come in any of the following exquisite tea variants: Raspberry, Assam, Darjeeling, English Breakfast or Tibetan Tiger.

T Salon and Emporium has been sharing its passion for teas with the coffee-loving Philippine market since 1996. The store carries an impressive and rare selection of imported Black Teas, Green Teas, Fruit Blends, and Herbals, which are blended and vacuum packed to ensure the highest quality standards. Perfect tea companions like cakes, scones, cookies and various tea-related merchandise complete its varied offerings.

Royal Doulton, makers of fine and bone china, has a proud history of artistry and craftsmanship dating back to the 1800s. Its Royal Albert line with its lavish 22-carat border and intricate floral designs evokes luxury and decadence.

Royal Albert's collectible tea cups and saucers, available in six floral patterns, are perfect gifts all year round. Each tea set can be complemented with a generic teapot, cream jug and covered sugar bowl that can go with any of the six designs.

Royal Doulton is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation and available only at Rustan's Makati.

LUK YUEN Noodle House offers Cool and Sweet Delights this season. They include Jello Crystals (P55), with crushed ice, milk, special syrup, and gelatins in three different flavors; Pihng Pihng Tien Tien (Chinese-style *halo-halo*), almond jelly with lychees and herb jelly with fruit cocktails. Also available are Luk Yuen's Sweet Delights like Momo Chacha (Thai-style *ginatan*), sesame balls, peanut rolls and fresh fruit shakes. Luk Yuen Noodle House has outlets at Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City (tel. 8671395); Gateway Centre, Paseo de Magallanes (8536966); Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan (7212620); SM Megamall Bldg. B Basement (6331610); Cash & Carry Filmore, Makati City (8432061); and Alabang Town Center (7723028).

CROWNE PLAZA features "Sichuan Festival," May 18-June 3, at Xin Tian Di Chinese Restaurant, 4/L of Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila. Special guest chefs will prepare authentic Sichuan-style dishes like Gold-rimmed Ribs, Flowering Spring Rolls, Yacai-steamed Chicken Wings and Paotan Pork.

CLAWDADDY Crabhouse and American Grill offers Boston's Classic Clam Chowder by Chef Pete, Boston's favorite soup cooked with the freshest clams, salted pork and potatoes. Clawdaddy's bestsellers include Baby Back Ribs, Hickory Chicken Roast, Crab Maritess, Crab Singapura, Butter-Ginger Crab, Fidel's Pepper Crab, New Orleans Barbecue Crab, Crab Casino, among others. Clawdaddy restaurant is located at The Ledge, 6/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Ortigas (tel. 6365679).

SUPER BOWL of China is serving fruit shakes and ice cream desserts this summer. Shakes are available in watermelon, melon, green mango, ripe mango and pineapple flavors. Also available are Banana Split, Super Bowl Halo-Halo and assorted sundaes (tel. 7378888).

DINING OUT

2nd Ilonggo food fest May 7-11

CHEF PAULINE GORRICETA-BANUSING of Iloilo returns to the Captain's Bar of Mandarin Oriental Manila May 7-11 for Manamit II, the second staging of the Ilonggo Festival. Held to mark the National Heritage Month, the buffet lunch that features the cuisine of Panay, is presented by Heritage Festival Inc., in collaboration with Mandarin Oriental and Air Philippines. Banusing is the chef-owner of Villa Regatta Ilonggo Seafood Restaurant in Iloilo. The weeklong festival will feature, among others, grilled seafood, Kansi, Sinugba na Baboy na may Atsara, Pinamalhan na Salmon Belly, Adobado na Alimusan, Chicken Tinuom, and Shrimp Pansit Molo, among others. Desserts include Baye-baye, Oton's Bibingka, Dulce Gatas, Butterscoti, and Yema cake.

FRESH oysters from Roxas City in Mandarin's weeklong festival

DADS ULTIMATE BUFFET offers a delectable spread of Asian cuisine, in addition to Dads' popular dishes like American roast beef and turkey, Spanish *callos* and paella, Italian pasta and many other classic dishes. Diners can have a taste of exotic dishes from Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Korea and the Philippines laced with curries, lemon grass, shrimp paste, coconut, *wansoy*, *pandan* and many other tasty ingredients. The buffet includes spring rolls from Vietnam and India, lemon-grass flavored and scented soup and seafood and vegetables with chili and shrimp paste from Thailand, fiery dishes from Indonesia and Malaysia, desserts from Singapore, and the best Filipino and Korean dishes. Meanwhile, Saisaki is having the Seafood Festival while Kamayan offers the all-new Bagong Sarap Filipino buffet festival. Dads Ultimate Buffet is priced (VAT exclusive) at P515 and at P415 during promo days. It is available in all Dads branches at SM Megamall, Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, Edsa, Padre Faura and West Avenue. Call 6363785 or 8928898.

MELO'S STEAKHOUSE, home of certified Angus Beef, and Sushi-Ya are two of the restaurants that have opened at Westgate Alabang. Opening soon are Ilustrado, a Filipino restaurant, and Rumah Makan and Bali Blends, both serving authentic Indonesian food. Already at Westgate are Zong, Oyster-Oyster, Hula-Hula, Poquito Mas, Koreana, Café Breton, UCC Cafe, Congo Grille, The French Corner, Café Adriatico, and Brother's Burger. Westgate Alabang is at the Commerce Avenue, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City (tel. 8503516 and 8503515, westgate@filinvest.com).

MAX'S RESTAURANT is now serving an old Filipino favorite—*champorado*. Max's Power Breakfast Triple Chocolate *Champorado*, an extra chocolatey recipe, is available 7 a.m.-10 a.m. daily, at all 72 free-standing outlets nationwide. Diners have the option to add vinegared, boneless and scaleless gourmet *tuyo* to their *champorado*.

BURGOO offers freshly brewed gourmet teas, flavored with mangoes, strawberries and oranges perfect for the season. Call 9277424, 8981815, 6875254, 7264663, 9127939, 556009, 4420115 and 6336256.

GUMBO offers refreshing fruit juices and shakes by the pitcher such as Peach Bellini, Berry Lemonade and O Lychee. These drinks are perfect with Gumbo's grilled dishes like Chicken Limone, T-Bone Steaks and Seafood Feast. House specialties include Chicken and Seafood Jambalaya and the Chicken and Seafood Gumbo, Jumpin' Fish and Chips, Super Salmon Pizza, Seafood Spaghettini, Four Seasons Salad, among others (tel. 5560038 to 39 or 4420446).

THE CONSUMER

When buying second-hand is not being a wise consumer

By Linda B. Bolido

YOU MAY THINK YOU ARE A WISE AND frugal shopper by getting used items instead of brand-new products.

But Liz Pulliam Weston, writing for MSN Money, says some things, for financial and safety reasons, are just not worth the savings you make by buying them used.

Here are some things that Weston says you should never buy used:

1. Laptops. Buying any used computer entails some risk but Weston says it is particularly dicey to get a second-hand laptop.

Lugged around everywhere and anywhere, the thing is subject to greater abuse than a desktop and is more likely to have been dropped, banged against something, or spilled on with food and beverage.

In fact, she says laptops are one of the few products where "an extended warranty with free tech support makes sense."

Exceptions are refurbished units that come with a warranty, especially those that have been refurbished and certified by the manufacturer.

2. Plasma television. Weston says you will need not only the warranty that comes with a brand-new set but should also spend for an extended warranty.

"You'll want the coverage because, if your screen dies, it can cost thousands to fix or replace—sometimes almost as much as it would cost to buy a new TV," she says.

While defect rates have declined, Weston says problems with this technology are still common—and repairs remain expensive.

3. DVD players. The machines, Weston says, have lasers that will eventually wear out. Like a plasma TV screen, replacing them will probably cost as much as a new unit.

"Whenever repairs cost that much, buying new is often advisable. Add to that the fact that prices are constantly dropping while the technology is constantly improving, and buying new becomes a slam dunk," Weston points out.

4. Vacuum cleaners. Like the laptop, this machine is prone to abuse. Fixing it may cost more than a brand-new unit.

5. Camcorders. Again, like the laptop, this is one machine that people are more likely to drop or bang against something. In fact, Weston says dropping this machine "is almost inevitable."

Camcorder motors can also wear out and may cost a lot of money to replace.

The exception, as in the laptop, is a refurbished model that comes with a warranty.

6. Shoes. Even brand-new but poor-fitting shoes can cause a lot of problems from bunions to back aches. Buying a pair that has been "broken in" by somebody else will only compound those problems.

Weston says it is particularly important to keep this in mind when buying for kids whose feet are still growing.

7. Mattresses. Weston says, before you buy that cheap second-hand piece, "think of all the stuff you do on your mattress." You may end up spending nights with other people's mold, mites, bacteria and bodily fluids.

Weston also points out that mattresses are not meant to last forever. "Even the good ones typically have a life span of just eight to 10 years, and it's hard to know for sure how old a used mattress may already be."

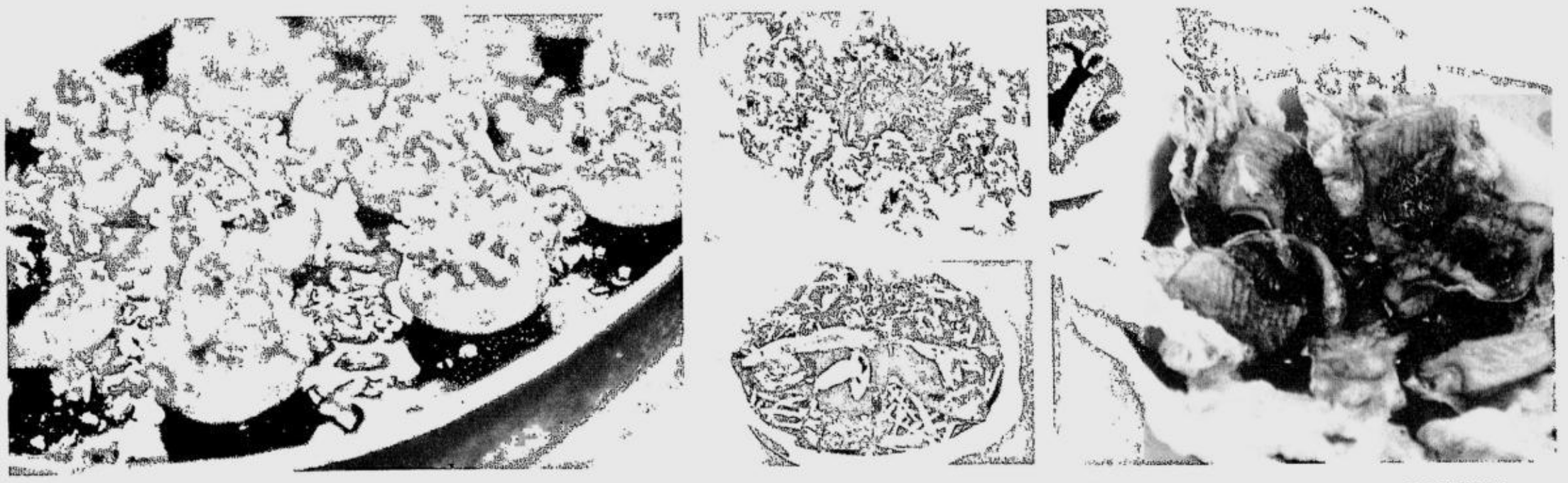
8. Helmets. A helmet, Weston says, is meant to protect against just one accident. One crash can destroy the foam inside the helmet casing but the damage may not be visible.

Likewise, she discourages buying car seats that had figured in accidents.

Weston only mentioned it in passing but we should emphasize underwear. The *ukay-ukay* that has become many Filipinos' source of fashionable threads also carry lingerie.

But wearing used basic essentials is worse than sleeping on someone else's mattress. Either you expose yourself to all the yucky things that the former owner had or you risk serious allergic reactions from the chemicals used to disinfect and sanitize used clothes.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph



New resto branch in new QC mall

CLOCKWISE from left: Garlic Mushroom Stuffed with Bangus Sisig; Tofu Steak with Bangus Sisig; Grilled Milkfish Belly of Sampalok Candy Sauce and Crispy Kangkong; Bangus Salpicao with Fried Kamote

BANGUS SPECIALTY Restaurant is opening on May 16 at Trinoma, a shopping complex at North Avenue corner Mindanao Avenue.

Owned and managed by Bangus Republic Inc., the restaurant (tel. 7252751 or 721-0794 loc. 33; www.bangusresto.com; e-mail email@bangusrepublic.com) will open at Level M-1 fronting the scenic elevator and garden on or before May 8.

Trinoma, the first Ayala-owned shopping mall in Quezon City, has a floor area of 200,000 square meters.

Although it is known for its various dishes using the national fish, Bangus also serves *bulalo, kare-kareng buntot,* crispy *pata*, pork *sisig, binagoongang baboy*, among others.

The restaurant has also launched *Nagbabalik na Klasik*, a menu consisting of old favorites. Included in the classics is Binusog na Tinapang Bangus. The Bangus Restaurant original is *bangus* with stuffing of *tinapa* flakes, green mango strips, egg strips, raising and peanuts.

Other must-try items are Bangus Sisig, Pocherong Bangus and Sotanghong Lumpia.

Other Bangus branches are in Carpark 1, Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan, 7253038 and 7228750; 2/L, East Lane, Robinsons Galleria Mall, Edsa corner Ortigas Ave. Quezon City, tel. 6350561 or 6321806; Ground Floor North Parking Building, SM Mall of Asia, Bay Blvd., Pasay City, tel. 5560386.

Grilled Milkfish Belly With Sampalok Candy Sauce and Crispy Kangkong

(Seared bellies topped with sweetened homemade *sampalok* candy sauce, inspired by Japanese teriyaki)

6 pc *bangus* belly
225 g *sampalok* candy sauce
50 g sugar
100 g water
15 g cornstarch
1 g salt, iodized
1 g spring onion
50 g crispy *kangkong*

Mix all ingredients. Let it boil. Add *sampalok* candy sauce and corn starch dissolved in water. Let it boil again.

Tofu Steak with Bangus Sisig

(Healthy, low-calorie meal with *bangus*; ideal for those dieting/health-conscious; a meal in itself)

125 g soft tofu
2 g parsley
20 g red bell pepper
20 g green bell pepper
10 g long *sili*
2 g spring onion
200 g *bangus* fillet
56 g water
10g chicken liver

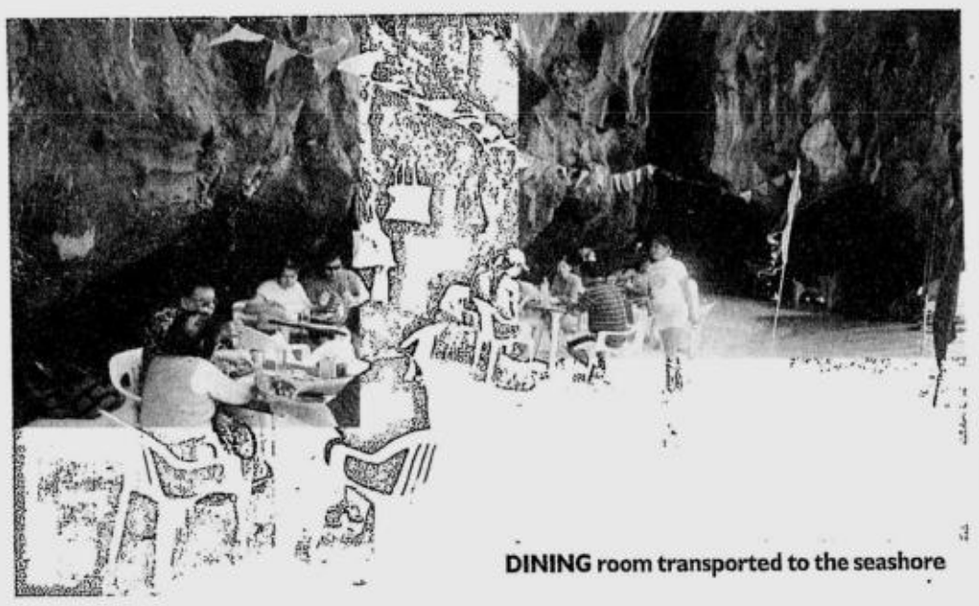
Fry fillet until golden brown, then fry the chicken liver. Chop the fillet and chicken into small pieces. Add iodized salt, spring onion, red and green pepper. Mix. Top soft tofu with *sisig*.

Garlic Mushroom Stuffed with Bangus Sisig

(Best as *pulutan*; two-in-one—*bangus sisig* and garlic mushroom combined)

100 g mushroom
15 g garlic
200 g *bangus* fillet
10 g green bell pepper
2 g spring onion
10 g oil
1 g fried garlic batch
¼ g black pepper
¼ g iodized salt
10 g chicken liver

Fry fillet until golden brown, then fry the chicken liver. Chop the fillet and chicken into small pieces. Add black ground pepper, iodized salt, onion, and green pepper. Mix. Top garlic mushroom with *sisig*. Serve on sizzling plate.



DINING room transported to the seashore

A piece of heaven

From page C1

number at the restaurant where he used to work, probably upon the order of his executive chef.

The day before, chef Supe gave another kind of performance, a cooking demo. He prepared paté and a pasta dish with fish eggs or *bihod* as the main ingredient. We tried not to eat too much because dinner was just around the corner.

Bonding time

Perhaps the most amusing exercise we had was at every cocktail hour or bonding time. During cocktails, they asked every pair to go to certain areas on the island where there were small tables with wine and some finger food.

I was thankful that they did not make me climb the many steps to the bar. Drinking and steep stairs do not go together.

FISH and meat grilling at the picnic

For one cocktail, we were brought by boat to the shore of another part of the island. Candles were placed on one of the rock faces and we drank and listened to music. Nature's bar was certainly better than most. When we returned for our dinner at the resort, a full moon made everything perfect.

I am grateful that Club Noah always included seafood, whether fish or shellfish. How ironic it would be to be on an island and seafood is not on the menu. I can understand if vegetables were lacking because there was hardly any place for a garden.

The desserts were also exceptional, pastries made with care.

I was informed that the kitchen staff was researching indigenous Palawan food. That should include the ethnic cooking of several tribes, as well as the cooking of the Cuyonon, descended from the first settlers on Cuyo island.

If the dishes are not viable (such as the fermented meat dish of Cuyo), the guests could just be informed about them just to give a bit of the culture of the place.

At Club Noah, a cabana used as a function room has a floor made of bamboo slats. We were informed that the floor was really a musical instrument of a Palawan tribe. Sounds are made by stomping the feet.

In this piece of heaven, it is good to be told about the country where it is situated and its people.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04 @yahoo.com

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Sylvia Reynoso-Gala — Gold Medalist, Academia de Gastronomos, Madrid, Spain – 1964
Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied in 6 Cooking Schools in Hongkong

Morella Reynoso Gala — Valedictorian, I.H.M.E.S. International Hotel School, United Kingdom – 1992
Studied Cooking at Le Cordon Bleu, London
✓ ALSO TEACHES AT # 25 GLADIOLA ST. UPPER Q.M., BAGUIO CITY TEL. # (074) 444-8844

Ernest Reynoso Gala — Graduate : Italian Institute for Advanced Culinary & Pastry Arts under Chef Director John Nocita, Soverato, Calebria, Italy
Graduate : Le Moulin de Mougins Alain Llorca, Cannes, France
Graduate : Ecole Ritz Escoffier, Paris Ritz Hotel, France
Graduate : Ecole Lenotre Pattisserie, Plaisir Cedex, France
Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied at Chopstick and Hongkong Town Gas Culinary Schools

MAY 3 THU 1:30 - 5:00PM - ALL NEW RECIPES IDEAL FOR FRANCHISING BUSINESS! FASTFOOD OR FOODCARTS! DEEP FRIED ADOBO SIOPAO W/ "KALISKIS"; STEAMED SHRIMP BALLS; STEAMED CRABSTICKS W/ GLASS NOODLES; SINGAPOREAN BEEF RENDANG (MONTEREY BEEF IN COCONUT CREAM); SINGAPOREAN STYLE MANGO SHAKE; COFFEE SHAKE; ICE CHEE (TEA W/ LYCHEES). P1,680. BY SYLVIA

MAY 5 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - 6 NEW INTERNATRIONAL MEAT LOVERS COURSE BY ERNEST. P1,800. ITALIAN MONTEREY BEEF SHANKS W/ HUNT'S GRAVY & PASTA (OSSO BUCO); DANISH FRUIT STUFFED MONTEREY PORK ROAST; AMERICAN STYLE BAKED MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN BBQ; SOUTHERN STYLE AMERICAN FINGER LICKIN' MONTEREY PORK SPARERIBS; GERMAN MEATBALLS W/ CREAMY CAPER SAUCE & PASTA; BAKED ARGENTINA BEEF MAC W/ CORN & CHEESE.

MAY 7 MON 1:30 - 5:00PM - 9 SPECIAL BARBECUE - BEEF TERIYAKI IN SKEWERS; PORK SPARERIBS IN HOISIN SAUCE; MAGNOLIA CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS IN HONEY SAUCE; (SATE A JAM) CHICKEN SKEWERS IN PEANUT SAUCE; BEEF RIBS W/ PEKING NOODLES; DELICIOUS SPARERIBS; NEW KOREAN BEEF BARBECUE; NASIGORENG (INDONESIAN FRIED RICE); FERNANDO MIGUEL ERENETA'S CHICKEN HONEY; THE BEST PORK BARBECUE W/ SPECIAL PEANUT SAUCE. P1,800. BY ERNEST

MAY 8 TUE 1:30 - 5:00PM - 10 MINI CHEWYBARS FOR BEGINNERS & TEENS. WALNUT BAR; MANGO BARS; LEMON BARS; BANANA CHIP BARS; PRUNE BARS; RICOA CHOCOLATE CHIP BARS; LEMONY NUT BARS; RAISIN BARS; DATE NUT SQUARES & CHOCO-MERINGUE BARS. IDEAL FOR BUSINESS OR AS GIFT TO FRIENDS. P1,800. BY ERNEST

MAY 9 WED 1:30 - 5:00PM - 7 NEW BREAKFAST TREATS FOR HOME OR RESTAURANTS. P1,680. BY ERNEST & SYLVIA. BAKED HAM & CHEESE FLORENTINE; BAKED HEARTY SPANISH OMELET; SAUSAGE, EGGS, MAGNOLIA CHEESE CASSEROLE; FRIED SCOTCH EGGS W/ HUNT'S TOMATO SAUCE; EGGS IN A NEST; FRENCH MUSHROOM & MAGNOLIA CHEESE OMELETTE W/ MUSHROOM SAUCE; FRENCH TOAST SRUFFED W/ MAGNOLIA MOZARELLA COOKED IN MAGNOLIA FRESH MILK & MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER. ALL HEARTY & YUMMY!

MAY 10 THU 1:30 - 5:30PM - ALL NEW ROASTS & PASTAS COURSE 2. BY ERNEST. P1,800. CHATEAUBRIAND W/ BERNAISE SAUCE; (BEEF TENDERLOIN) MONTEREY ROAST RACK OF LAMB W/ CREAMY CUCUMBER SAUCE; TENDER ROAST BABY BACK PORK RIBS W/ SPECIAL BBQ SAUCE; BAKED LASAGNA W/ RICOTTA & MAGNOLIA MOZARELLA CHEESES; SPECIAL MAGNOLIA CHICKEN SPAGHETTI W/ 4 CHEESES. PLUS MANY BONUS RECIPES OF DIFF. SAUCES & GRAVIES FOR MEATS & PASTAS!

MAY 11 FRI 1:30 - 5:00PM - MAX'S STYLE FRIED CHICKEN. JOLLIBEE STYLE CHICKEN W/ GRAVY. CHICKEN BURGER; DELICIOUS POTATO SALAD; SIZZLING GRILLED PORK CHOPS; FOUR SEASONS PUNCH; RIPE MANGO MELON TAPIOCA W/ SAGO; GREEN MANGO JUICE. P1,680. BY SYLVIA

MAY 12 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES 1. LEARN TO COOK JAPANESE STYLE TENDERLOIN STEAKS W/ BELL PEPPERS; MONGO SPROUTS; WHITE ONIONS; JAPANESE MIXED FRIED RICE (KAMAMESHI); YAKITORI (CHICKEN BARBECUE IN SKEWERS); MISO SOUP; BREADED PORK CHOPS (TONKATSU); SUKIYAKI; CUCUMBER IN JAPANESE VINEGAR DRESSING; SWEET DRIED DILIS (APPETIZER). P1,680. BY SYLVIA

MAY 15 & 22 (2 TUESDAYS) 1:30 - 4:30PM - P2,600. MONEY MAKING CHOCOLATE FANTASIES COURSE. (#1 SELLER IN MANILA). CHOCOLATE COATED POPCORN; CREAM-FILLED CUPCAKES; STICKY WALNUT BROWNIES; CHUNKY CHOCO COOKIES, GERMAN STYLE FUDGY CAKE W/ ICING; CHOCOLATE TURTLE CHEESECAKE; BROWNIES; MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH TIRAMISU #2. BY ERNEST

MAY 16 WED 1:30 - 5:00PM - 7 NEW FISH COURSE. BY ERNEST & SYLVIA. P1,680. SALMON STEAKS W/ EGG SAUCE; POACHED SALMON W/ DILL SAUCE; FLAKED CENTURY PINK SALMON IN PASTRY (SALMON COULIBAC); BAKED FISH PACKETS W/ MIXED VEGETABLES; SALMON STEAKS W/ GARLICKY WHITE SAUCE; CENTURY TUNA MEATLOAF; TUNA RICE PAELLA; ALL SERVED W/ DELICIOUS KANI (JAPANESE CRABSTICK) CUCUMBER SALAD IN CREAMY DRESSING.

MAY 17 THU 1:30 - 5:30PM - ALL NEW STEAKS & SALADS COURSE 2. BY ERNEST. P1,800. MONTEREY FILETS MIGNON W/ CAPER SAUCE; SIZZLING ITALIAN PORK PARMIGIANA TOPPED W/ MAGNOLIA MOZARELLA CHEESE; HEARTY MEDITERRANEAN SALAD W/ ANCHOVIES, CAPERS, FETA CHEESE, SPECIAL CRAB SALAD W/ CREAMY MAYO; FETIVE TUNA; POTATO, APPLE, BEET SALAD W/ HEAVY CREAM. PLUS MANY BONUS RECIPES OF DIFF. SALAD DRESSINGS & TIPS ON COOKING TENDER JUICY STEAKS!

MAY 18 FRI 1:30 - 5:00PM - CHINESE COOKING - ROAST MONTEREY PORK LIEMPO; MRS. OLIVIA TEE'S FOOKIEN STYLE AMOY FRESH LUMPIA; PORK SIOMAI W/ QUAIL EGGS. HONGKONG SHRIMP SIOMAI; HACAO (SHRIMP DUMPLING W/ HOMEMADE CLEAR WRAPPER) P1,680. BY SYLVIA

MAY 19 SAT 1:30 - 4:30PM - DELICIOUS RESTAURANT SPECIALTIES YOU WILL LOVE TO DO AT HOME - GARLIC-ROASTED CHICKEN W/ PEPPER SAUCE;MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN CUBES SALPICADO; FETTUCINE W/ 3 DIFF. SAUCES; PESTO (GARLIC BASIL), BLACK SQUID INK, & CREAMY MAYO CHEESE. HIGHLANDS SALAD W/ OLIVES & BLUE CHEESE DRESSINGS; HOT CARAMEL BANANA FUDGE BROWNIE PIE W/ CREAM. PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF CENTURY TINA BURGERS, BEEF BURGERS, W/ DIFF. DRESSINGS. P1,800. BY ERNEST

MAY 21 MON 1:30 - 5:30PM - AUTHENTIC ITALIAN COOKING 1. BY ERNEST. P1,800. MOZARELLA IN CAROZZA (FRIED CHEESE SANDWICHES); RISOTTO CON SCAMPI (RICE W. PRAWNS); POLENTA PASTICICCIATA (CORNMEAL W/ WHITE SAUCE); PETTI DI POLLO ALLA BOLOGNESE (BONED CHICKEN BREAST W/ PROSCIUTTO & CHEESE); BISTECA ALA PIZZAIOLA (BEEF TENDERLOIN STEAKS W/ TOMATOES & GARLIC); CASSATA ALLA SICILIAN LAYERED CAKE W/ CHEESE & CHOCOLATE ICING).

MAY 23 WED 1:30 - 4:30PM - MONEY MAKING CHINESE FASTFOOD RECIPES. WONTON NOODLE SOUP; DELICIOUS MAKI SOUP; STIR FRIED LOMI; KUTCHAY DUMPLINGS W/ EASY-TO-MAKE HOMEMADE WRAPPER; PORK CURRY RICE; AUTHENTIC CHINESE STYLE SHRIMP FRIED RICE. P1,680. BY SYLVIA

MAY 24 THU 1:30 - 5:30PM - NEW SOUPS & SEAFOOD COURSE. BY ERNEST. P1,800. SHRIMP CHOWDER; FRENCH ONION SOUP; NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER;; PRAWNS THERMIDOR; CHARCOAL-GRILLED TUNA BELLY W/ TERIYAKI SAUCE; POACHED HOLE TUNA W/ HERB MAYO. PLUS 10 BONUS RECIPES OF SUPER GOOD SAUCES FOR FISH & SEAFOOD!

MAY 25 FRI 1:30 - 5:00PM - OPEN A COZY KOREAN RESTAURANT. LEARN TO MAKE THESE KOREAN SPECIALTIES: KIMCHI; SPINACH SALAD; MIXED RICE W/ KOREAN BEEF; BEAN SPROUTS; KOREAN PORK BARBECUE; DEEP-FRIED BEEF IN SKEWERS; CRAB & PORK FRIED RICE; KOREAN STYLE SOTANGHON; OJINGKO POKUM (SQUIDS IN HOT SAUCE); ROSE KUI; KOREAN BEEF STEW TOPPED RICE. PLUS KITCHEN-TESTED BONUS RECIPES. P1,680. BY SYLVIA

MAY 26 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - OPEN A PIZZA PARLOR - LEARN TO MAKE THESE ITALIAN FAVORITES. MOZARELLA-TOPPED BIG & THICK CRUST PIZZA (BAKED IN A RECTANGULAR PAN); THIN CRUST PIZZA W/ DIFF TOPPINGS; FETTICINE ALFREDO; SPAGHETTI CARBONARA; BREADED VEAL STEAKS W/ LEMON; PEACH-FILLED CREPES W/ FRUIT SAUCE. PLUS 12 BONUS RECIPES OF PASTAS & SANDWICHES P1,800. BY ERNEST

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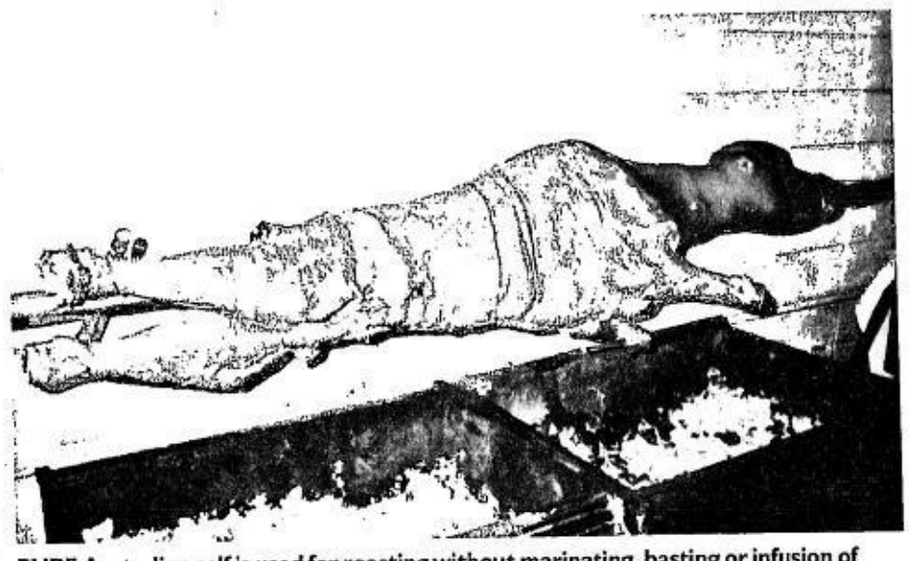

PURE Australian calf is used for roasting without marinating, basting or infusion of any seasoning. Flavor is added when the roast is served with Aurelio's own Hawaiian sauce.

A roast for Mom

With a whole calf to nibble on, family and friends can linger and catch up as long as they want to make May 13 truly a daylong event

By Linda B. Bolido

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX THIS Mother's Day.

Instead of taking Mom to her favorite restaurant for the usual lunch or dinner on May 13, why not invite her closest and dearest to your home for a more casual and fun, less restrained bonding and re-bonding?

You do not have to stress yourself planning the menu, preparing the food or arranging the tables. Aurelio's Catering (tels. 7267321, 7217952 and 0920-9201883) will take care of all that for you. And the centerpiece he has planned for the event promises to make this Mother's Day special and memorable for everyone—Australian roasted calf.

With a whole calf to nibble on, family and friends can linger and catch up as long as they want to make Mother's Day truly a daylong event, not just a few hours.

Chef Eli Aurelio, who has been in the catering business for 35 years and has mastered the art of calf-roasting, assures prospective clients they can expect to get the most tender, juiciest and tastiest meat.

He says he buys only female pure Australian calves, aged 6-7 months, from reputable local breeders. The calves are fattened in his own farm in Tagaytay City for two months before they are ready for slaughter. After slaughter, the carcass is hung upside down for 24 hours to drain the blood and then aged for two to three months in a freezer.

The aging process, Aurelio says, not only makes the meat more tender but also enhances the flavor.

Aurelio says roasting is done right at the party venue. One of the first questions he asks when an order is placed is the layout of the party venue to see if there is space for cooking.

He says only a small space is required for roasting the calf, which is delivered in a spit. In fact, he says, even in high-rises, they can do the roasting on the ground floor to ensure that the meat is freshly roasted when served. The process takes two to three hours. Very rarely do they deliver cooked meat, he says.

Aurelio gives the assurance that the cooking will not cause any conflict with the neighbors because the process of roasting by charcoal produces very little smoke. It may raise the numbers of guests, though, as the aroma may draw the neighbors to where the calf is roasting.

True flavor

The chef says the calf is roasted without marinating, basting or the infusion of any seasoning. Flavor is added when it is served with Aurelio's own Hawaiian sauce. Gravy is optional.

As for the calf's liver, Aurelio cooks it into steak.

If people feel roast calf alone does not a party make, Aurelio can add sidings like mashed potato, buttered vegetables, pasta and/or salad bar.

As part of the service, a three-person team will take charge of the dining table, carving the roast and attending to the guests' needs. Aurelio's people will also fix the tables, putting the necessary tablecloth and/or skirting.

Aurelio's Australian roast calf is available in three sizes—medium (P25,000); large (P27,000); and jumbo (P29,000). The chef says they usually need two to three days notice to set up for a party, but may also be able to deliver on a 24-hour notice. They can also deliver to almost any point in Luzon.

Other specialties of Aurelio's catering are Black Angus Roast Beef of Rib Eye, Briskets, Tenderloin, Chuck Roll and Top Sirloin.

So, this Mother's Day, if you want to earn more brownie points with Mom, surprise her with a roast-calf party. Or you can make roast calf the piece de resistance on Father's Day, which is coming up next, or any special event you are planning.

A·I·C·A
The Academy for International Culinary Arts

10% DISCOUNT

FUNDAMENTALS OF PROFESSIONAL COOKING
The course focuses on techniques just as much as on specific recipe production in order for the students to understand the science behind cooking.
Join the academy and start thinking like a chef.
10% DISCOUNT for classes starting : **May 8** (weekday class) and **May 12** (weekend class)

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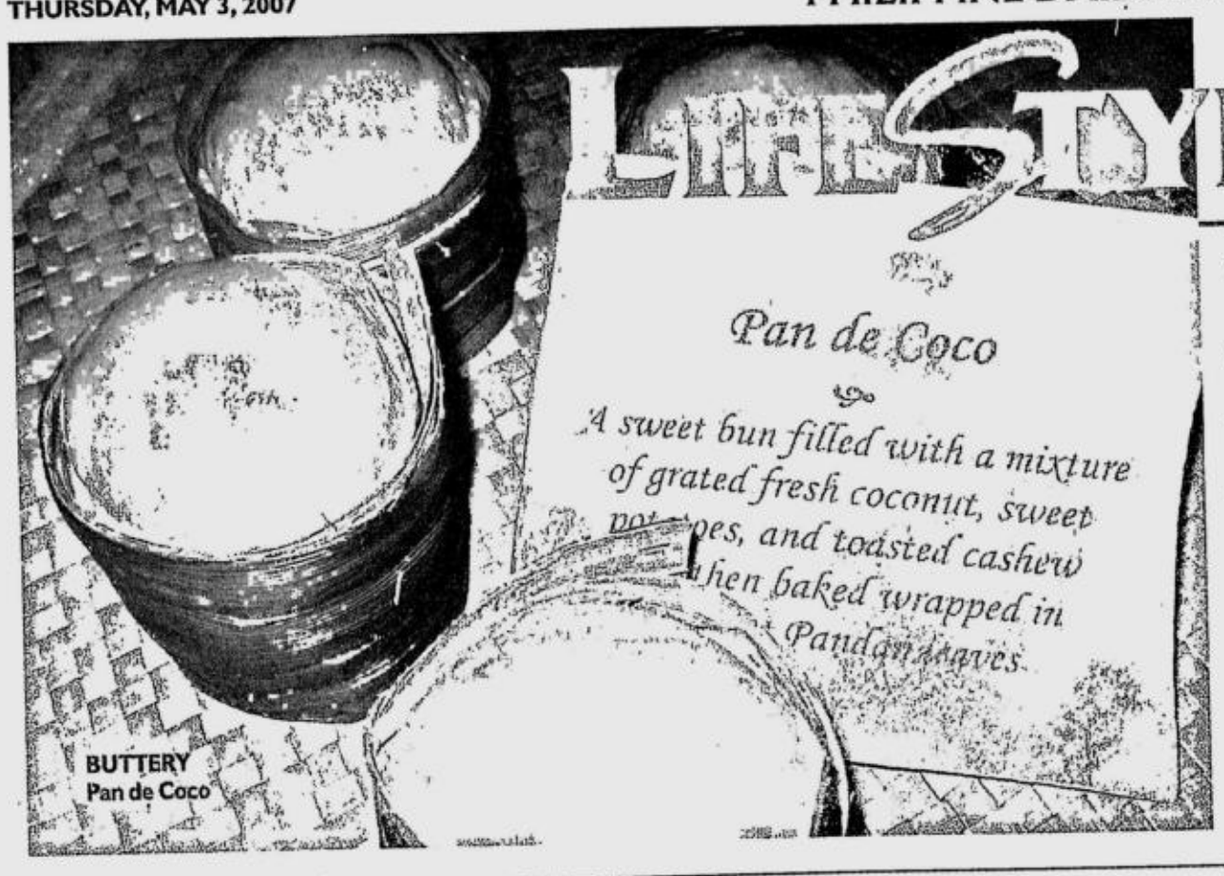
Course Begins on June 5(afternoon & evening class), July 10 (morning class)

2nd floor Skyway Twin Towers, Capt. Henry P. Javier St., Pasig City, Philippines
Telephone (632) 672.2271 Telefax (632) 672.2119
Email aicachef@yahoo.com www.aicaculinary.com



We have an able team with the talent, the spirit and the will to win

KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

MassKara inspires Pinoy entry in baking contest

THE WEEK AFTER NEXT will be a test of sheer skill, talent and ingenuity for our culinary teams joining the Hong Kong Food Expo (Hofex). The Hofex is a competition that we are all looking forward to for it has been quite a while since we assembled such a formidable team.

Apart from the Le Toque Blanche (LTB) Philippine Team, we are also sending a team of instructors from the Center for Culinary Arts (CCA), who will compete in the Live Bakery Competition where professional bakers are tasked to produce two types of French bread, two types of rolls, three types of Asian buns, two kinds of laminated pastries and one specialty bread.

And, as if that isn't arduous enough, they must also produce an all edible bread showpiece for that final touch on the display table. Allotted time? Well, nine hours! Talk about pressure.

Two years ago, the same team competed and brought home the bronze. This year, with some tricks up their sleeves, I wouldn't be surprised if they bag the gold.

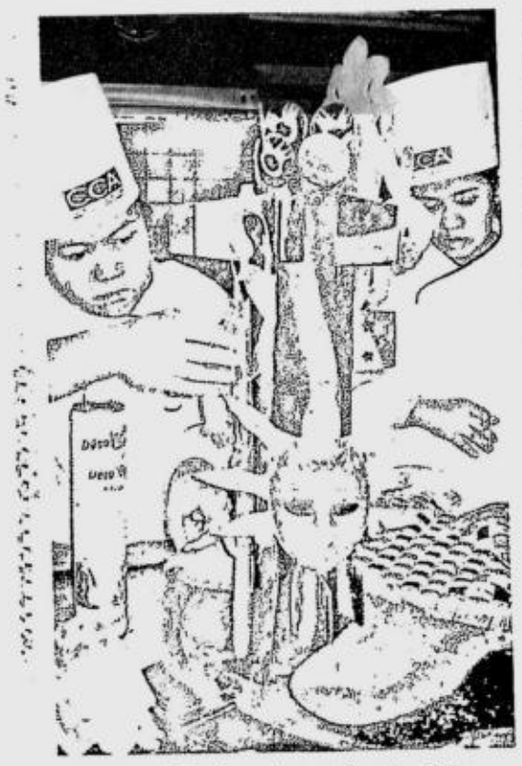
Tribute to Pinoy creativity

I was fortunate enough to have dropped in on the team during practice. The centerpiece was precious, inspired by the MassKara Festival, tediously made and meticulously assembled. The bread piece itself is a tribute to Pinoy craftsmanship.

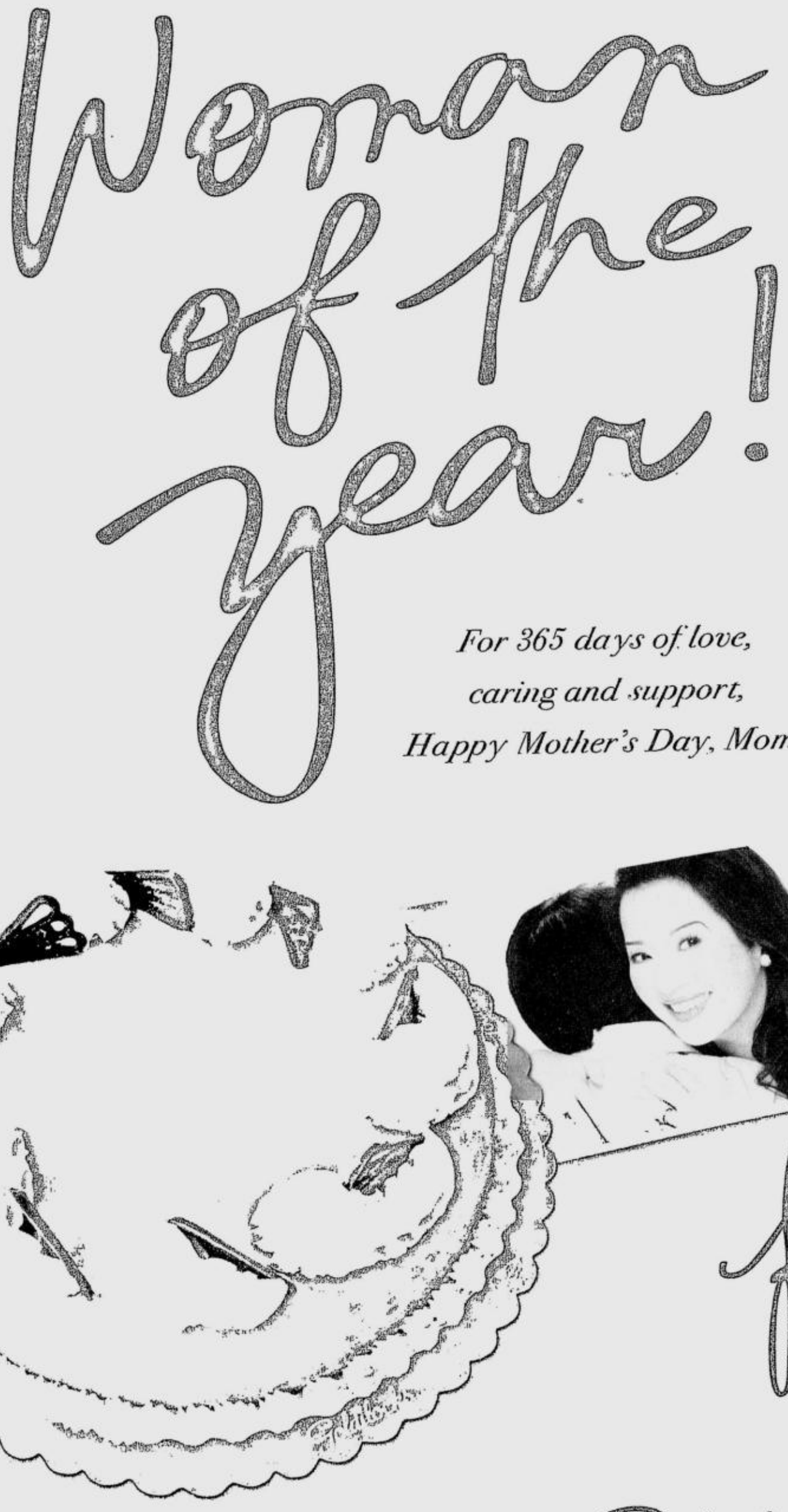
The breads are equally impressive. Worth mentioning because of the creativity are the Chicken Satay Savory Buns shaped like *sepak takraw* balls and the Humba, a soft bun filled with shredded stewed pork and fermented mustard leaves, topped with ground peanuts then wrapped and baked in banana leaves.

The *pan de coco* wrapped in *pandan* leaves, filled with grated fresh coconut, sweet potatoes and toasted cashew nuts; and the Buko Coffeecake—brioche,

MASSKARA/ D4



CHEFS add final touches to the all-edible bread showpiece.



GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

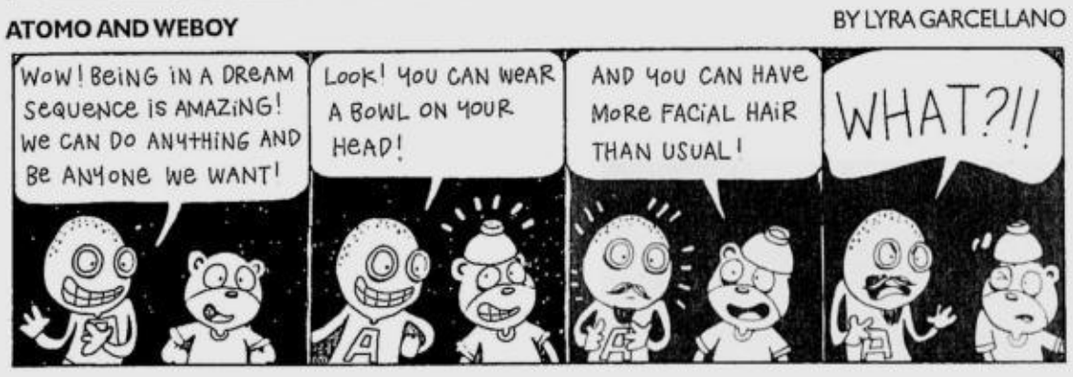
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

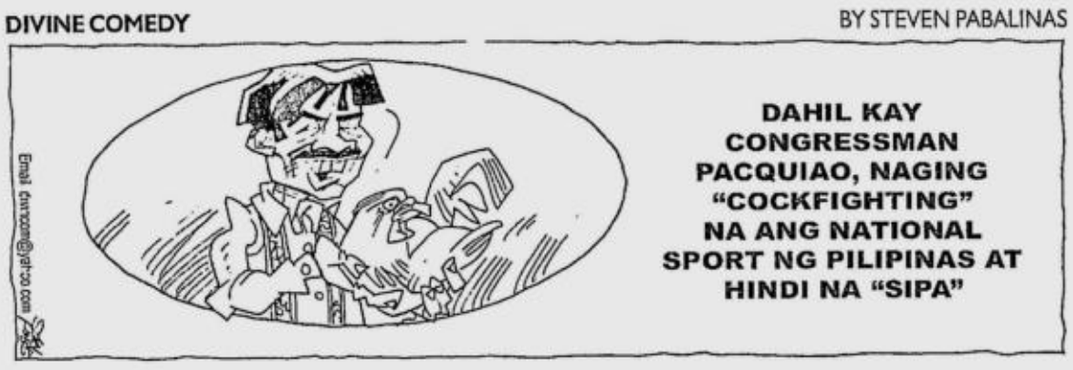
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO



DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS



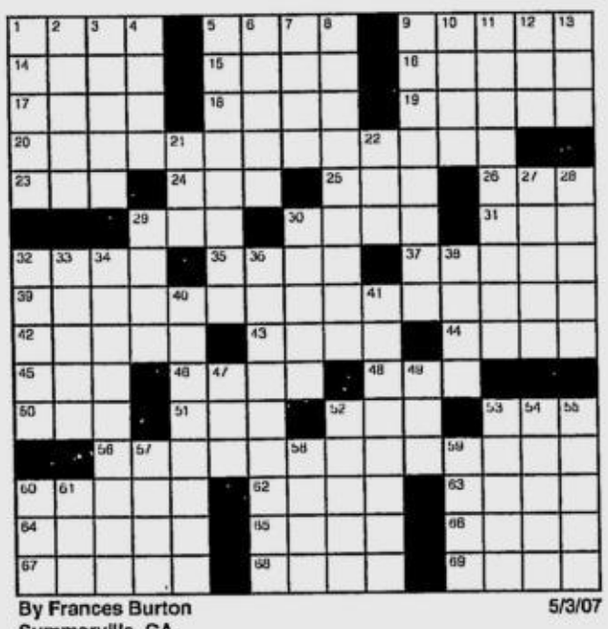
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Frances Burton
Summerville, GA
5/3/07

ACROSS
1 Farm yield
5 Iditarod transportation
9 Shiny fabric
14 Earring site
15 Five-star
16 Before, before
17 Redolence
18 Cup edge
19 Backslide
20 Start of a quip
23 Help!
24 Samovar
25 "__ the season..."
26 Long period of time
29 USNA grad
30 Address for a queen
31 Numbers pro
32 First chancellor of reunified Germany
35 Bellicose deity
37 Buenos __, Arg.
39 Part 2 of quip
42 Elton's instrument
43 Hammerhead part
44 Relative of etc.
45 Apiece
46 Coconut fiber
48 Bishopric
50 PC key
51 Common conjunction
52 $ source
53 Poorly lit
56 End of quip
60 Muscat resident
62 Pelvis bones
63 Tasty mollusk
64 Pound poem part
65 Peruse a paragraph
66 Choir voice
67 Rider
68 Child's play
69 Cereal grasses

DOWN
1 Clumps of dirt
2 Cowboy exhibition
3 Wind instruments
4 Felon, to the fuzz
5 Carpenter's tool
6 Navigator's aid
7 "National Velvet" author Bagnold
8 Small cup
9 "Death of a __"
10 Where to worship from?
11 Super sensitive
12 April 15 addressee
13 Born as
21 Sat. follower
22 By way of
27 "Turandot," e.g.
28 Twangy
29 Verve
30 Author of "The Monk's Wedding"
32 Fraternity letter
33 Bay window
34 Central region
36 Quick delivery
38 __ fixe
40 Site
41 Wavering
47 Lennon's love
49 Emma's twins?
52 Diva's forte
53 Lifelessly
54 Bent out of shape
55 Office notes
57 Aware of
58 Reply of the accused
59 Wound locater?
60 S. American tuber
61 Like Carroll's Hatter

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

C	H	A	S	M		T	A	P	E		A	G	A	S
P	A	R	E	E		I	D	E	A		M	O	R	T
O	M	I	T	S		T	I	E	S		A	L	T	O
			T	H	E	H	O	L	Y	G	R	A	I	L
A	P	S	E		N	E	S	S		T	E	N	S	E
L	A	T	E	N	T				D	O	T			
I	L	O		A	R	C	A	D	E		T	A	S	S
F	O	U	N	T	A	I	N	O	F	Y	O	U	T	H
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			X	L	S				A	L	P	I	N	E
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G	O	L	D	E	N	F	L	E	E	C	E			
O	R	E	O		A	T	T	N		O	D	E	T	S
R	E	M	O		N	E	R	D		I	G	L	O	O
A	D	A	R		A	N	A	S		R	E	I	N	S

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HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're intelligent and clever. You often have strong views about things, especially religion or politics. Because you're so witty and charming, you generally can persuade others to agree with you. Fortunately, you're flexible and realistic. You're quick to see the big picture. You have excellent business savvy. Get ready for one of the best years of your life! Dream big!
Birthdate of: Pete Seeger, singer/activist; James Brown, soul singer; Joe Murray, cartoonist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're still wondering what you want to be when you grow up. (Hopefully, you're not waiting at the train station when your ship comes in.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Continue to work to solidify your home base. You want to have a solid anchor in the world. Attend to repairs, renovations and potential residential moves.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Many of you are going through residential and job changes now. Just accept this and go with the flow. It's timely.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): One of the biggest things on your plate right now is trying to figure out how to earn money or to find the kind of job you like. The bottom line is that you must ponder your deepest values.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Many of you are setting off in new directions now. Things are beginning to germinate. You're feeling your way in a new world.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Some of you feel like you're in limbo. That's because this is a time of letting go and giving up things, people, places and possessions. You're preparing for something new.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your primary challenge at this time is to learn how to work with others (especially groups) without losing your own identity at the same time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Although you have a lot of responsibilities right now, it's also a very powerful time in your life. You see what is working, and you see what is not.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Many of you can sense that you're nearing something that's important to complete. This is definitely a time of preparation for something wonderful in the next few years.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Recently, you've had to learn how to stand on your own two feet. You've become stronger, more resilient and certainly more confident in who you are.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Partnerships and close friendships have been very challenging for you . Some will fall by the wayside; others will have to undergo readjustments.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You've been working hard for several years now, and you will have to continue to work hard in 2007. The payoff is that the recognition that you want for your hard work is just around the corner!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		6				1		
			1		2			
8		3				4		5
	9		2		4		1	
	5		9		8		6	
1		4				8		2
			7		9			
		8				3		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/03

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	6	9	4	8	3	2	5	7
2	3	8	5	7	6	4	1	9
4	7	5	2	9	1	6	3	8
9	5	1	7	4	8	3	6	2
7	2	4	3	6	9	1	8	5
6	8	3	1	5	2	9	7	4
8	4	6	9	3	5	7	2	1
5	1	7	6	2	4	8	9	3
3	9	2	8	1	7	5	4	6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/02

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TASTE TESTS

Choco-peanut spread

The yummy combination of peanut and chocolate is now in the creamy ChocoMani Choco Peanut Spread.

The salty and sweet spread may be served for breakfast, snack, or anytime of the day. Kids will enjoy it in their *baon* or *merienda*. It is made from the freshest peanuts and finest ingredients also used for the peanut chocolate ChocoMani.

ChocoMani Choco Peanut Spread comes in three sizes: 120 grams (packed in microwavable plastic cups), 240 grams and 340 grams. It is now available in all leading groceries, supermarkets and sari-sari stores nationwide (tel. 3646507 or 3604115; e-mail MDC_mktg@hotmail.com.

Mini choco chip oatmeal cookie

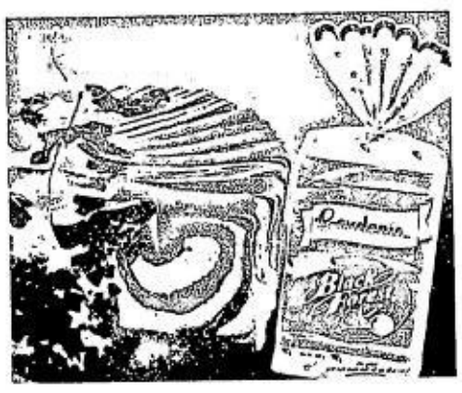
Grand Aiphatech Incorporated (Galinco) introduces the Chips Delight Mini Butter Choco Chip Oatmeal Cookie. The cookies combine the richness of butter, the sweetness of chocolate chips and the chewiness of oatmeal in bite-size pieces. They are available in 130-gram reseal-able zip-lock Party Pack pouches. Galinco also makes Chocolate Chip Cookies and Smiley's Sandwich Cookies.

New instant tea

The Nai Cha Instant Milk Tea, a drink made from custom-blended tea powder, milk and sugar, is now available in the market.

Made by Grand Aiphatech Incorporated (Galinco), makers of Chips Delight Chocolate Chip Cookies and Smiley's Sandwich Cookies, it consists of black and green tea leaves and can be enjoyed by both children and adults.

Nai Cha Instant Milk Tea is easy to prepare. It is conveniently packed in boxes of six sachets and can be instantly served hot or cold. It is available in all leading supermarkets, convenience stores and drugstores.



German classic in a loaf

The unique taste of Germany's Black Forest Cake is now in a bread.

Gardenia's Black Forest loaf captures the flavor of the chocolate layer cake made with cherries, Kirsch (cherry brandy), chocolate shavings, and whipped cream.

Made with high-grade chocolate and red cherry bits, the Gardenia Black Forest Loaf blends its special ingredients of cherry cream and chocolate with Gardenia's fine, high-quality bread.

Gardenia Black Forest Loaf (tel. 8898890 and 049-5391136 to 40; www.gardenia.com.ph) is available in supermarkets and grocery stores.

Cool blends

Beat the summer heat with Cool Blends, specially concocted cold drinks from Tsoko.Nut Batirol.

There are slushes with real fruits, Iced Cappucino, Choco Amaretto, Mocha Latte Shake, Cookie n Cream n Coffee, Coffee Hazelnut, Iced Banana Batirol, Banana Spritz, Watermelon Shake, Mango Tango and Tropical Fruit Samba.

Tsoko.Nut Batirol has outlets at SM Makati; WalterMart, Makati; De la Rosa Carpark 1, Makati; Fun Ranch, Pasig; Shopwise Sucat, Parañaque; and soon RCBC Plaza, Makati.

Packs of goodness

Anchored on Filipino traditions of *pasalubong*, Goldilocks presents all-new variations of its much-loved Bitbit Packs.

There are six packs to choose from, ranging from the classic collection of fluffy *mamon*, cheesy *ensaymada*, and assorted cake slices to the healthy pack that includes a combination of sugar-free *mamon* and sugar-free *ensaymada*.

Special Bitbit Packs this season includes a set of special breads (ube, mongo and apple raisin), as well as cinnamon roll, peanut butter roll and assorted polvoron pack of 10.

Each pack comes with a free Eight O'Clock one-liter powdered juice sachet.

Sandwich buffet preparation

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS SCHOOL OF Culinary Arts is offering the following courses:

May 4—Beef & Horseradish (all new): Home-cured Apple Corned Beef with Apple Horseradish Sauce; Sandwich/Taco & Wraps Bar of Roast Beef Carved on the Spot with sauces, condiments, salads (perfect sandwich buffet, great for entertaining)

May 5—Decadent Steaks (all new): Whole Grilled Carpaccio Steaks; Rock Grilled Wagyu Steaks done three ways: with Foie Gras Butter, with Spanish Sauces, with Oriental Sauces and Sides; Roasted Rib Steak with garlic butter, wedged lettuce, apple and blue cheese pasta

May 7—From the Sea 07 (all new): Crab Bisque with Brie Toasts, Tempura of Soft Shell Crab Salad, Tom Yam Crabs Stir-fry, Whole Fried Lapu-lapu with Tausi Sauce, Whole Fried Seabass Escabeche, Steamed Lapu-Lapu in Coconut Milk, sides

May 9—Lamb Lechon: Roasted Lamb, *lechon baka*-style, with herbs, sauces, sides, soup, salad, dessert. Call 9289296, 9273008.

Asian flavors

Maya Kitchen showcases the rich and exotic culinary treasures of Asia. Beginning with "Modern Japanese Specialties," May 5, 2-6 p.m., combines food lore with practical tips and skill-building lessons on how to prepare Japanese food. Tasting sessions and cooking classes will be conducted by Seiji Kamura.

Learn to make Indian breads and Chutney in "Roti, Paratha & etc.," May 5, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. This hands-on class will show you all the steps necessary to create Indian meals.

Feast on delicacies in "Kakanin," May 12, 2-6 p.m.

"Fundamentals of Bakery Production," May 8-11, 2-6 p.m., covers basic and commercial baking techniques, theory practice for Commercial Scale Productions with free baking cookbook.

"Junior Culinary Workshop" for kids ages 6-10, May 9 and 11, 9 a.m.-12 nn, offers fun classes: Day 1 – Mighty Burger, Power Rice, Strawberry Soda, and Fruity Waffles. Activity 1 – Hand Molded Alphabet Cookies; Day 2 – Orange Frostee, Savory Chicken Boat, Kiddie Spaghetti, and Waffle Dog. Activity 2 – Edible Candy Clay.

Put your culinary skills to work in "Catering Seminar," May 15-17, 3-6 p.m., and learn legal and technical aspects to get started in Catering Business, Facilities, Personnel, Menu including Portioning and Quantification. Actual cooking of International Cocktail Menu and Fruit Punch Special Dessert are also included. Attendees get a free catering cookbook.

"Basic Culinary," May 15-18, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., presents the basic principles of proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; use of herbs and spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing and boning poultry, filleting fish and meat fabrication. Enrollees get a free Mix and Match cookbook. Call Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays to Saturdays) at the 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City or call 892-1185 or 892-5011 local 108; e-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.

DECAFFEINATED Fairtrade Café Gold Rich Roast Freeze Dried Instant Coffee; Café Gold Rich Roast Freeze Dried Instant Coffee

Coffee and tea
at prices fair to growers

KENYAN tea is among the fine selection at Marks & Spencer

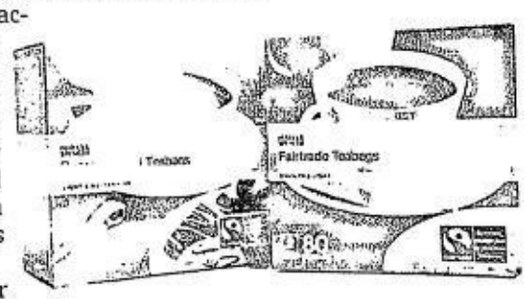
THE COFFEE AND TEA SOLD AT Marks & Spencer stores are Fairtrade sourced. This means the farmers who produce the product get a fair price for their crop plus a "Fairtrade Premium," which is invested into their community. It is important to guarantee farmers in developing countries fair terms and a fair deal, so that they can enjoy a better standard of living.

"We have only been able to make these major commitments because of the high ethical standards we have across our supply chain and close partnerships with our suppliers and the farmers they work with," said Stuart Rose, CEO at Marks & Spencer. "Our customers have told us they care about how our products are made and we want to help them make Fairtrade part of their retail habit."

Marks & Spencer Fairtrade coffee is available in ground and instant and there's also a choice of origins, blends and decaf to suit your tastes.

CAFÉ Revive Special Blend Organic Coffee

As with tea, the taste of coffee is also influenced by many factors; the altitude at which it is grown, the mineral content of the soil, the botanical variety of the plant and even the way in which the beans are processed.



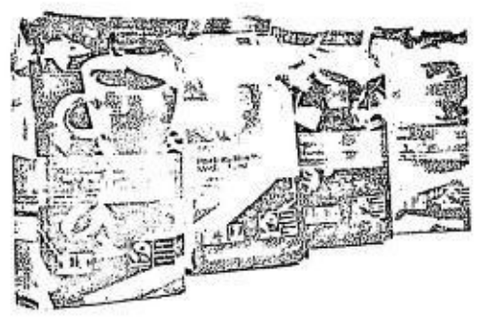
FAIRTRADE Decaffeinated Teabags-Light & Refreshing; Teabags-Smooth & Light

Marks & Spencer chooses the coffees from all around the tropical world including Central and South America, Africa and Asia. They have chosen to work with selected growers who are not only passionate about producing quality coffee, but are also committed to improving the quality of the lives of those who pick the coffee beans.

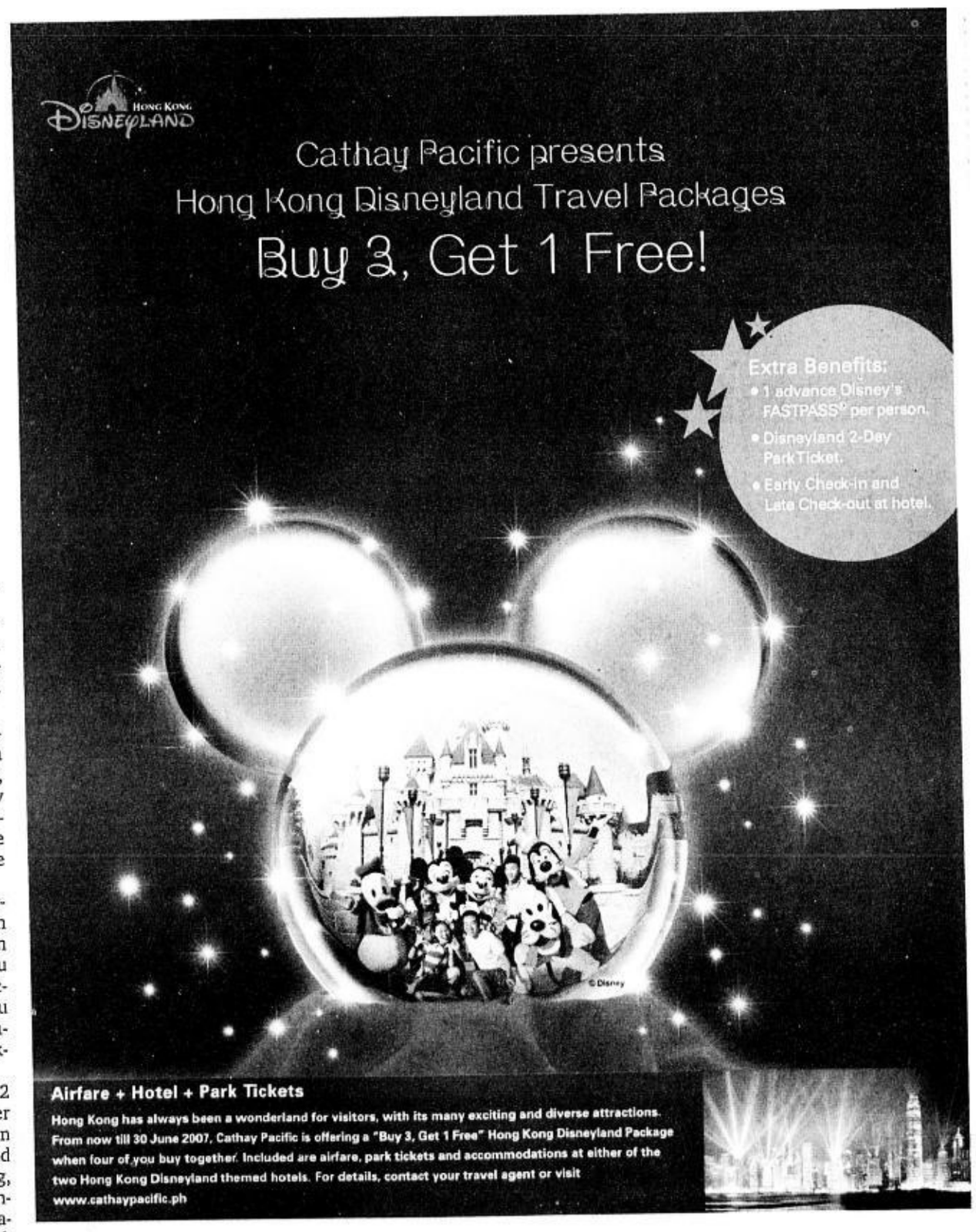
Through the sale of Fairtrade coffee, Marks & Spencer has contributed toward many projects including the development of a community school in Ethiopia.

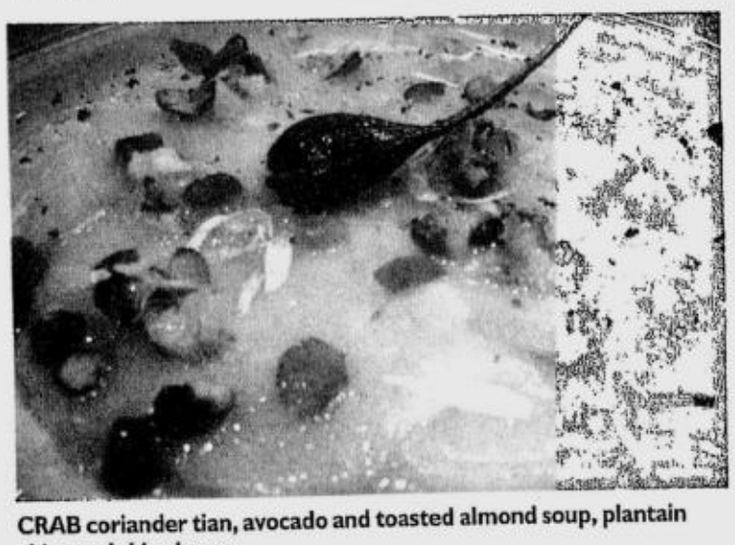
Soon to be available are Fairtrade-certified cotton products for menswear, which include plain and design polos, long-sleeve casual shirts, chinos, cargo shorts, jackets and socks. For ladieswear, you can look forward to Fairtrade-certified cotton casual tops and bottoms.

Marks & Spencer stores are located at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Glorietta 4, Greenbelt 3, Alabang Town Center, Power Plant Mall, Gateway Mall, SM Megamall, SM Mall of Asia, SM Pampanga, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila and Ayala Center Cebu.



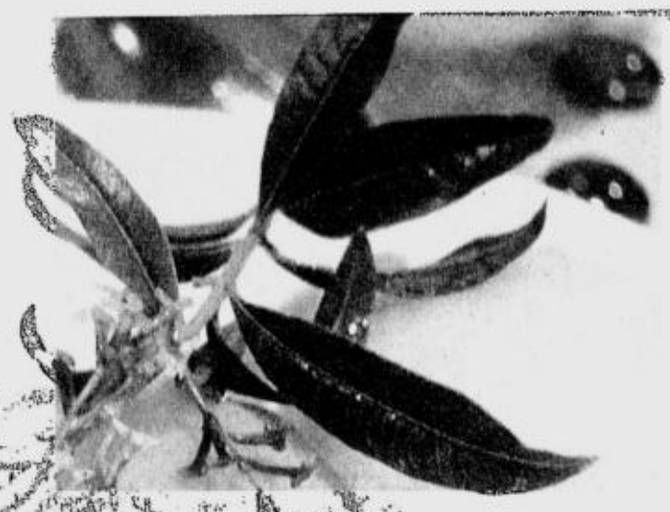
FAIRTRADE Expresso Dark Roast Ground Coffee; New York Blend Medium Roast Ground Coffee; Colombian Medium Roast Ground Coffee; Italian Blend Rich Roast Ground Coffee; and Classic Blend Medium Roast Ground Coffee



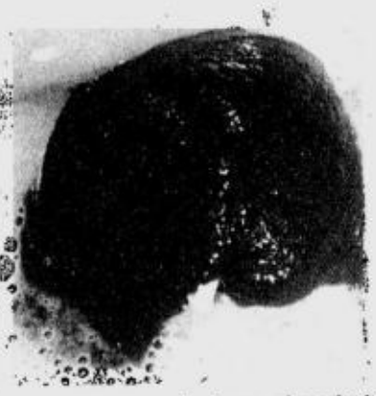


CRAB coriander tian, avocado and toasted almond soup, plantain chips and shiso leaves

At the two-week international gourmet summit in Singapore, iconic chefs and their fans meet and live out their culinary fantasies



BLOOD Orange, Pink Grapefruit and Green Apple Sorbet



STEAMED white asparagus poached eggs glazed with French "perigold" black truffle cream with chicken cream emulsion

All the world is a *gourmet* kitchen

Text by Emily A. Marcelo
Photos by Jhoana Acosta

HOW DOES ONE WAKE UP A MYRIAD gustatory organs on a lazy Sunday morning? Tastebuds that may have already grown weary from savoring a cacophony of dishes in an ongoing food marathon?

Forget being served the usual suspects like the ubiquitous hot coffee and buttered rolls. Trust an innovative and adventurous chef's whimsy and adventure to literally jolt sleepy eyes and feast on a rainbow of colors in a grouping of—sorbet!

Yes, that frozen sweet-sour concoction that you mostly get to see at the end of a meal. And why not? This is the time and place to shed inhibitions and explore fantasy. This is, after all, the yearly foodfest in Singapore called World Gourmet Summit.

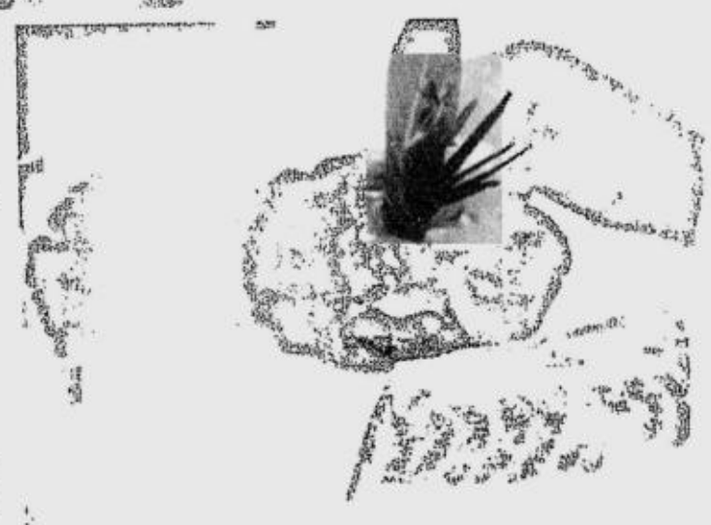
To celebrate the country's unique melting pot of homegrown and world cuisine, the Singapore Tourism Board has for the 11th year sponsored the World Gourmet Summit, a "luxe affair" truly worthy noting down on every Epicurean's wine-and-dine calendar.

This exclusive two-week gourmet festival features a world-class cast of iconic and master chefs as well as wineries serving up gastronomic experiences that will delight and satisfy even the most discriminating palate.

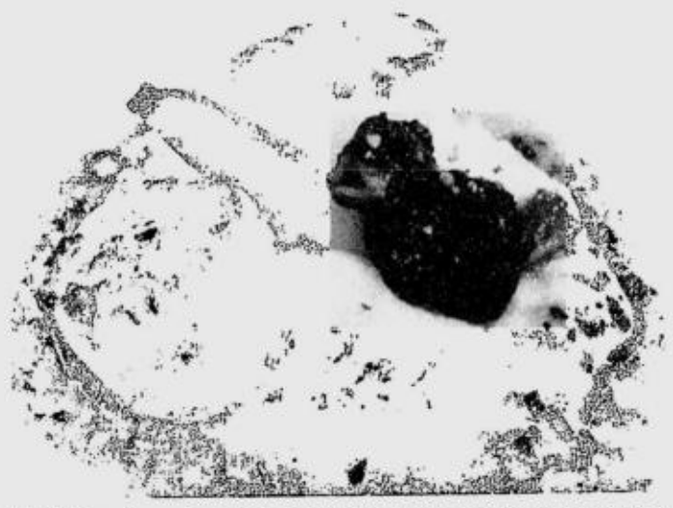
Don't anticipate then a gymnasium filled with *carinderias* or long lines around buffet tables. No, no, no!

The World Gourmet Summit is mostly a dressed up, five-star affair. Food is served on fancifully decorated table, like it is meant for royalty.

At the Pan Pacific Hotel's "Contemporary Sicily," for starters, begin combing your knowledge of wine and fathom the chef's vision in placing eight curvacious wine glasses before you. Then, as each plate is delivered with military precision, you can only gasp at the intricately designed food that looks almost too good to be eaten, with the taste markedly enhanced by the meticulously chosen wine accompaniment.



HOME-CURED Tasmanian "petuna" ocean trout, thin-sliced smoked haddock and eel, and sweet cherry tomato tartare



SEARED scallops, hazelnut and truffle risotto, glazed baby carrots, warm vinaigrette with meat jus

How does an almost vegan have the palate and sophistication to appreciate a culinary festival like this one? Easy. Good food is good food anywhere, just as a rose is a rose. I may not lick the plate clean, but I'll give the food on it a fair chance to knock my socks off or blow my mind with its taste.

Most of the presentations are colorful and truly seductive. And as in all festivities, you remember mostly the top and lowest ranking.

I give the baked rabbit leg and poached veal leg the opportunity to amaze me, bewilderment becoming more the name of the game. But what the eyes see and the mouth savors just don't meld. The chef with his creatively decorated plates does not succeed in making the taste live up to the ultimate sacrifice Bugs Bunny and Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer have made.

And out of a consensus of one, the Oscar goes to the ultra fresh entry of Louis Tay, executive chef of Swissotel Merchant Court. His mouth-watering Carpaccio of Sea Scallop on a Bed of Slightly Salted Prosciutto—topped with pomegranate, pink peppercorn, blood orange and deep-fried caper berries dressed with orange balsamico—was to die for!

Master chefs

Among the featured world-renowned chefs were Alain Lorca of Le Moulin de Mougins in the South of France; Ezio Gritti of l'Osteria di via Solata in Bergamo, Italy; Mark Best of Marque Restaurant in Sydney, Australia; and Romain Fornell of Caelis, Barcelona, Spain.

Guest chefs were Christian Faure of Le Cordon Bleu, Signatures Restaurant of Ottawa, Canada; and Philippe Clerque of Le Cordon Bleu, Paris, France.

Celebrities included Kevin Brauch of "The Thirsty Traveller" of the Discovery Channel's "Travel & Living" program and Serena Sutcliffe, head of Sotheby's international wine department.

A colleague gave me a light-bulb moment when she compared food festivals to watching fashion shows. Some clothes are good to look at but difficult to wear and some dishes are mouth-watering to the sight but.....

Still, the World Gourmet Summit is an ultimate high for any food junkie like me because it gives me an opportunity to see and taste the culinary artistry of chefs I've only read about.

Lessons learned? Bottom line, it's still different strokes for different folks... and that everything is relative.

And for innovation and adventure, I'll take sorbet anytime, even for breakfast. And then some.

MINI "Belon oooo" oyster omelet, Iranian "Golden Oscietra" caviar, sour cream

MassKara inspires Pinoy entry in baking contest

From page D1

INGENIOUS *sepak takraw*-shape *satay* chicken buns

coconut-lime cream, young coconut bits with buttery Edam cheese streusel baked a la *buko* pie, are, to me, exceptional!

So exceptional that I coerced James Antolin into taking orders so you can try them. These two can be proudly placed side by side the breads of the world.

Funny but the surge of Pinoy pride in me became intense after tasting these two creations. The cause of my pride... *Ayayay, tinapay*! (Unfortunately, you will have to wait for the team to get back before placing your orders. Call CCA for orders starting May 21 at 4264840-41.)

To our dearest team, I speak not just for myself when I say we are pressuring you to win! No less than the gold is what we expect! Hahaha!

Seriously now, I fret not for what we have is an able team, equipped with all that is required to conquer: the talent, the spirit, the determination to win and, by now hopefully, the funding. So from us to you, the best of luck. Go, guys, go and do us proud!

Support your team

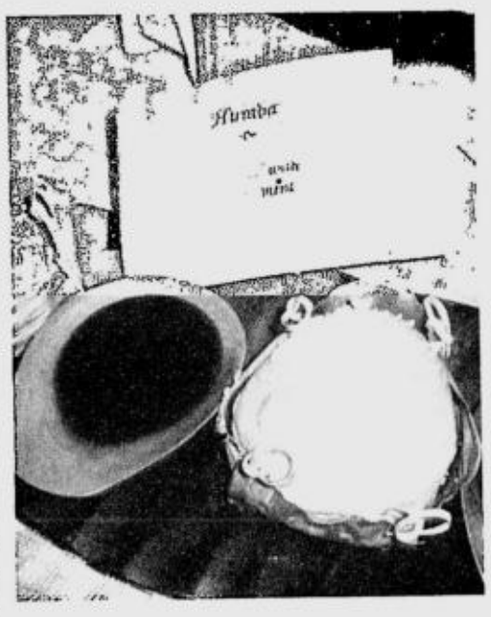
For those who have not savored the teams' Hong Kong repertoire, here is your last chance.

Join us for lunch at Gourdo's at The Fort this Sunday. To tease the senses, imagine some of the appetizers: Terrines of Foie Gras; Duck Breast with Mushroom Duxelle; Seafood with Asparagus and Crab Mousse; Seared Wagyu Beef with Leeks and Pickled Radish; Gorgonzola Cheese Flan with Candied Ginger and Balsamic Syrup.

Seats are limited to 30 so please confirm asap. Price is P3,000 net per person inclusive of wines, local beers, soft drinks, iced tea, coffee and teas.

E-mail chefjgamboa@elcirkulo.com; or call 8108735 and 8102763.

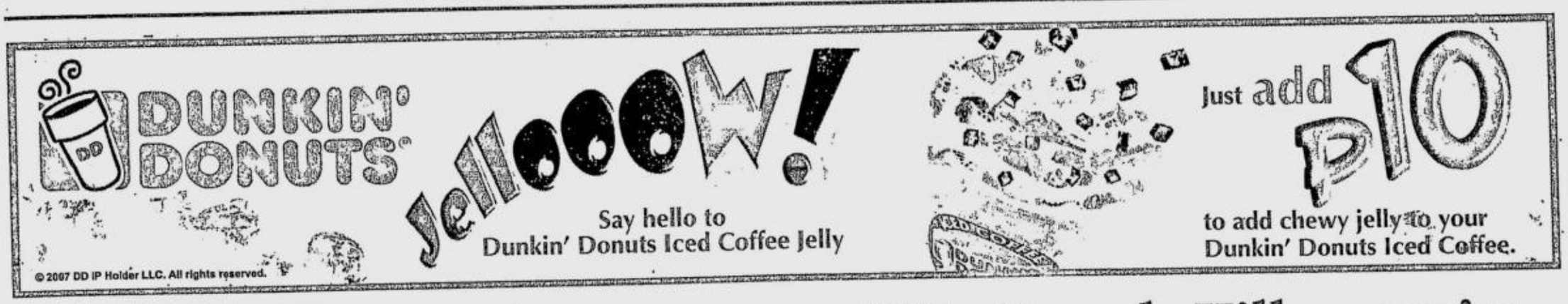
E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph.



A SOFT bun filled with stewed pork and fermented mustard leaves

LTB Philippine culinary team: J. Gamboa, Buddy Trinidad, Ariel Manuel, Arnold Guevarra, Tony Bleza, Boy Timola with glass artist Bobby Castillo

CCA culinary team: Garie Quiambao, Henry Ramos, Alfred Lim, Michael Yap, Roel Vargas, Brando Santos, Leo Martinez and James Antolin. Seated: Martha Ebro, Ria Lingad and Alma Cui



Married action star brings preggy GF to Beverly Hills mansion

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

GUESS WHO THIS MARRIED ACTION STAR is. He was recently spotted in Beverly Hills touring his six-month pregnant GF in the $6-million mansion he bought there. The hills are alive with the sound of illicit love? The girl is due to give birth in LA. Hmm ...

The devil wears indiscretion well in the City of Angels?

Clue: The action star has a regular TV show.

Rhetorical question

I couldn't help but laugh when a reporter asked Vic Sotto if it's true that he sometimes sleeps over in the Tagaytay rest house of the parents of GF Pia Guanio. Bossing and Pia are of age and they have frequent trips abroad, so such questions are already rhetorical.

Perhaps the reporter thought he was interviewing Oyo Boy Sotto?

Romantic warrior

Diether Ocampo is overjoyed that his *tele-epiko* "Rounin" beat its rival show during their pilot week of airing. "We are all happy that our hard work paid off," beams Diet.

Will his devotion to Kristine Hermosa also be worth it in the long run? "Like a Rounin warrior, I will fight for our love till my last breath."

L'amour is truly one commander-in-chief that true blue romantics like Diet salute to.

'Buzz' rival

GMA 7's "Showbiz Central" may have the right ingredients but it still has to come up with the perfect recipe to topple ABS-CBN's "The Buzz."

Its "Artista Facts" segment featuring stars' first screen appearance was a delight but their guests were not that engaging.

Wilma Doesnt refused to reveal the dad of her baby, Angel Locsin was evasive when asked how much money she has, Rustom didn't name his ex-celebrity BF and Janno kept mum about the girls linked to him. It defeats the purpose of a central jury grilling guests.

Either the live interviews were open-ended or they did hit a dead end.

Regine-Piolo film

For the first time on the big screen, Regine Velasquez teams with Piolo Pascual in a Star Cinema and Viva Films movie that will give love a new definition. The songbird's role in "Paano Kita Iibigin" (opens May 30) is her most mature to date—a single mom down on her luck.

VIC SOTTO

RODEL ROTONI

She goes daring in several scenes, which she has never done in her previous films. Piolo has not made a movie for over a year, reason enough to watch this film.

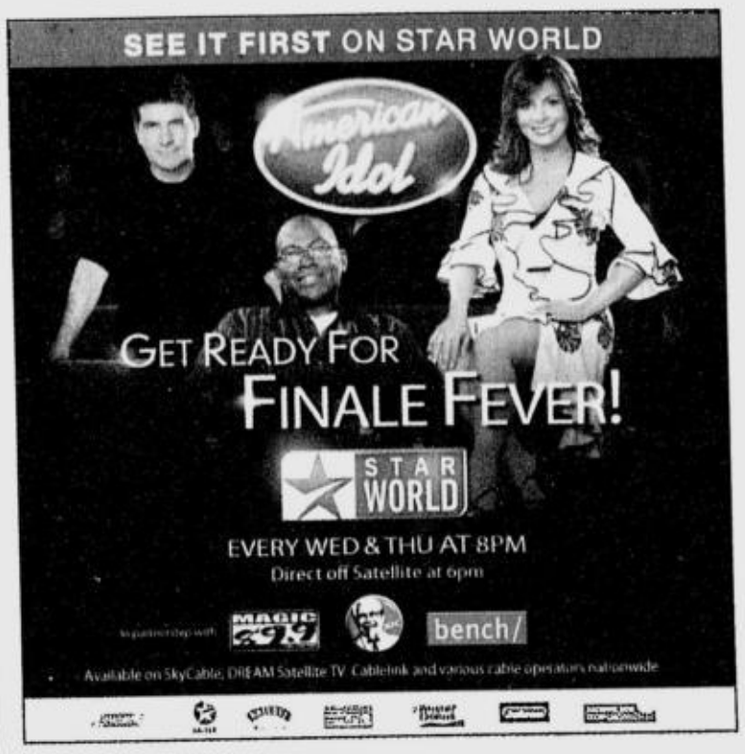
A back-to-back concert? The Kapuso diva plus the Kapamilya heartthrob onstage equals Ka-boom!

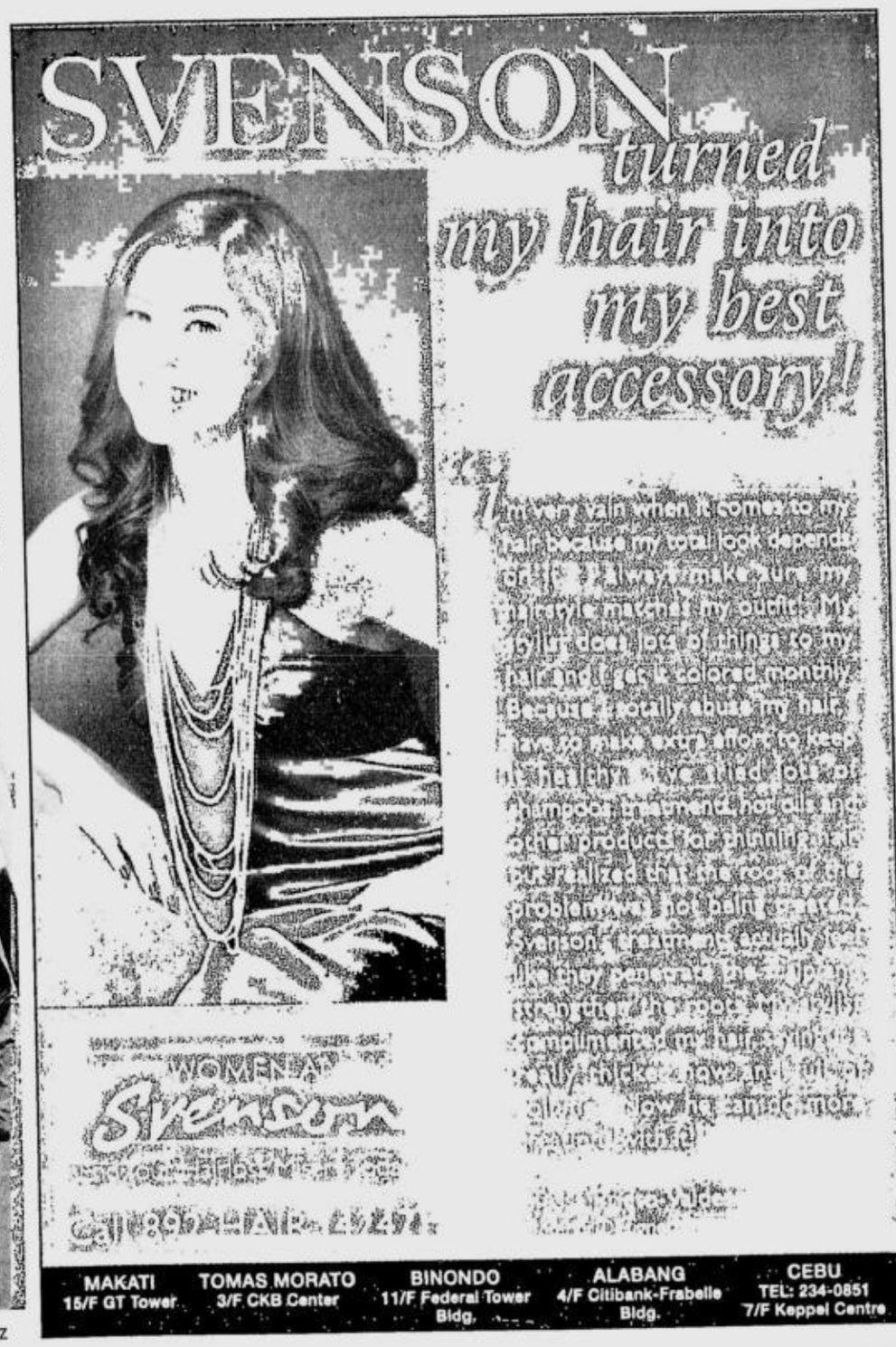
New album

"Retro Pop and Party Authority" Retrospect reinvents itself via its anniversary album "Retrospect Decade" (Godspeed Music, distributed by Ivory Music). The album contains 14 original house/dance and emo-rock tracks, including the radio favorite "Getaway."

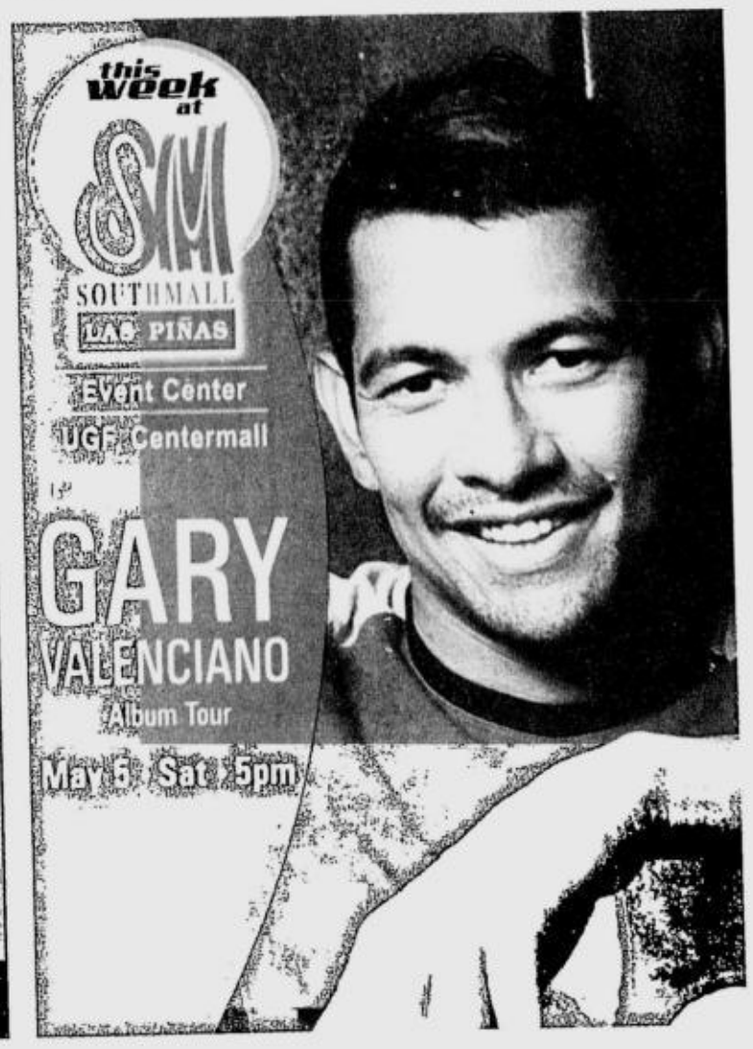
Get a copy and be blown away by the band's ultra cool music.

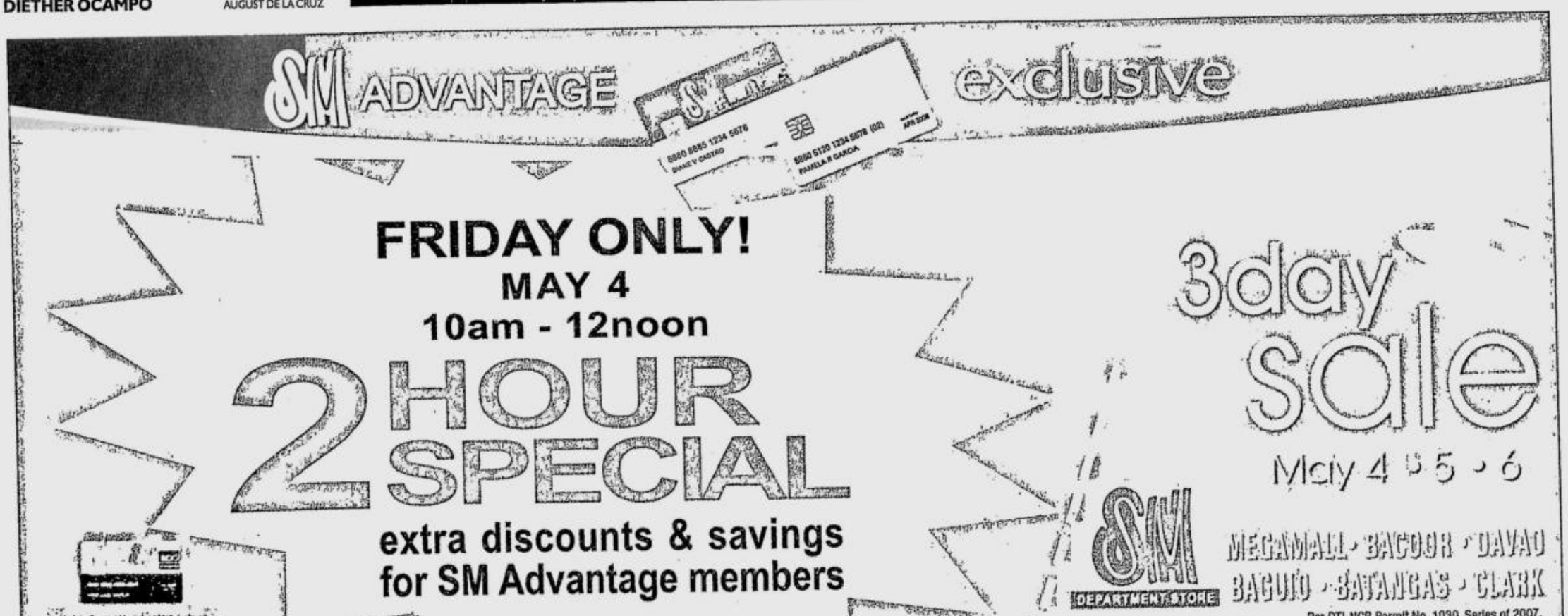
E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.





DIETHER OCAMPO AUGUST DE LA CRUZ





'Krunch Into The Web'

"KRUNCH INTO THE WEB" brings life to kids' Spider-Man dreams as it transforms the Block, SM City North Edsa into downtown Manhattan, New York City starting tomorrow until May 6.

The event, presented by Nestlé Koko Krunch, transports kids to the city where the action-packed adventures of "Spider-Man" take place.

Kids can try out various activities such as Sand Man's Dune, Green Goblin's Vault, Venom's Web, Spidey's Wall Crawl and Koko's Power Hurdle.

Other treats include the Coloring Activity and "Spider-Man 3" Costume Contest where kids can gear up to show their spider moves and win prizes.

KID FIT

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
PREMIERE
SPIDER-MAN 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

Starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 RESRVED

Metropolis Star Cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 PREMONITION

Theatres
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3

Pacific Mall Lucena CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-3371
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest Festival Cinema
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE SHOOTER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 THE SHOOTER

The Marketplace
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
4 SATANICA

Marsagana Cinema
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE SHOOTER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449348)
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Eastwood Cinemas
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
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4 SPIDER-MAN 3

Cinema 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
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1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
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3 SPIDER-MAN 3

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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2 SPIDER-MAN 3

Lianas Cinema
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1 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
2 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 OBSESSION
3 PLEASE CALL
4 PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SATANICA
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Berma Cinema
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2 SPIDER-MAN 3

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SPIDER-MAN 3 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:20 G
SPIDER-MAN 3 12:40, 3:40, 6:40, 9:40 G
SPIDER-MAN 3 12:00, 2:50, 5:50, 8:50 G

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 SPIDER-MAN 3 MTRCB GP 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
3 SPIDER-MAN 3 MTRCB GP 1:30, 4:30, 10:30
2 SPIDER-MAN 3 MTRCB GP 1:00, 4:00, 7:00 10:00
4 SPIDER-MAN 3 MTRCB GP 12:30, 3:30, 6:30
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Catch the early screenings of Spider-man 3 at 11:00 AM at the SHANG CINEPLEX on the following dates:
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CINEMA 5 SPIDERMAN 3 10:50, 1:45, 4:35, 7:25, 10:15 PG-13
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'Inter-active' film . . .

From page E4

Topacio points out, however, that the improvisational process did wonders on the greenhorns he works with on the GMA 7 comedy shows "Nuts Entertainment" and "Takeshi's Castle."

"It was good training for Iwa Moto, for example, on 'Nuts.' Apart from developing the skill of ad-libbing, it boosts confidence. It presents an exciting prospect for the actors," he says.

Tilt judges

Among the competition's judges are Regal Films producer Lily Monteverde, movie queen Amalia Fuentes, Miss Universe 1969 Gloria Diaz, TV host German Moreno, theater stalwart Behn Cervantes, actor-politician Jestoni Alarcon, painter Danny Sillada, photographer Edward de la Cuesta, Australian cinematographer Ron Donnelly, voice school owner and magazine publisher Alejandro Tarca, resort owner Tony Echavez and Earth Moving Pictures producer Dr. Tito Rotaeche Garcia.

Indie . . .

From page E4

about it (by both parties), to make success more possible.

Never mind playing the blame game, both parties should work together to address this problem. If mainstream cinema's output continues to remain low, theaters will need indie productions to fill their screening schedules—so, the solution to this problem will benefit everybody.

. Regarding the viability of the digital mode of screening, can steps be taken to make it reliable? If not, new out-of-the-ater screening circuits need to be developed.

Film education

Indie filmmakers and school heads should meet to see if the school circuit can be made stronger, and more financially beneficial to new filmmakers.

The schools have a key part to play in this regard, because film education and education through film have become significant aspects of the teaching and learning process in other countries, and should become more significant here as well.

Engaging talks

The key advantage of indie filmmakers is that they can be present at the screenings of their movies in schools, so students and faculty members can engage them in discussions that enrich their film viewing experience in a special way.

Other indie filmmakers are transposing their digital productions to celluloid for easy screening in mainstream theaters, but the additional process is quite expensive. Government bodies, foundations and other support groups should subsidize the cost, to give new filmmakers a much-needed helping hand

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1 SPIDER-MAN 3• THX
1:15 4:05 6:55 9:45

2 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:45 3:35 6:25 9:15

3 SPIDER-MAN 3
10:55 1:45 4:35 7:25BS 10:15

4 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

5 SPIDER-MAN 3
10:40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

6 SPIDER-MAN 3
1:00 3:50 6:40BS 9:30BS

7 PAN'S LABYRINTH
12:00 2:30 5:00

8 indieSine: NUMBALIKDIWA

9 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

10 SHOOTER
12:00 2:30 5:00

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1 SPIDER-MAN 3

2 FIREHOUSE DOG SHOOTER

3 SPIDER-MAN 3

4 SPIDER-MAN 3

5 SPIDER-MAN 3

6 SPIDER-MAN 3

7 SPIDER-MAN 3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

METRO EAST

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:30 3:10 5:50 8:30

2 SPIDER-MAN 3
10:30 1:30 4:10 6.50 9:30

3 SPIDER-MAN 3
10.30 1:30 4.10 6:50 9:30

4 SPIDER-MAN 3
11:30 2:10 4:50 7:30

5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

6 SPIDER-MAN 3
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

7 SPIDER-MAN 3
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

8 FIREHOUSE DOG SHOOTER

NOVALICHES

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3

4 SPIDER-MAN 3
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PIONEER

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3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
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DASMARINAS

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3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
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ANGELES

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4 SHOOTER / THE HILLS HAVE EYES

IMUS

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3 SHOOTER
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6 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

STARMILLS

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ILOILO

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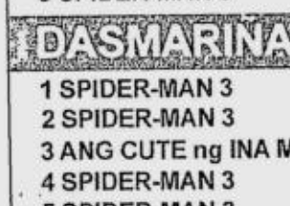
5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
6 PATHFINDER



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1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 THE REAPING/ SPIDERMAN 3
4 THE SHOOTER/ SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

PREMIERE CINEMA
SPIDERMAN 3

CENTERSTAGE
SPIDERMAN 3

THE PODIUM

CINEMA 1
SPIDERMAN 3

CINEMA 2
SPIDERMAN 3
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
IMAX
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5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 PAN'S LABYRINTH
9 SPIDERMAN 3
10 THE SHOOTER
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12 SPIDERMAN 3

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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3 SPIDERMAN 3/ PAN'S LABYRINTH
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5 SPIDERMAN 3/ THE SHOOTER
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11 SPIDERMAN 3/ ANG CUTE NG INA MO
12 SPIDERMAN 3/ FIREHOUSE DOG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
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8 SPIDERMAN 3
9 THE SHOOTER
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11 SPIDERMAN 3
12 WILD HOGS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
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6 FIREHOUSE DOG
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9 PAN'S LABYRINTH
10 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
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SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
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7 PAN'S LABYRINTH
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SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
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SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
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SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
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SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
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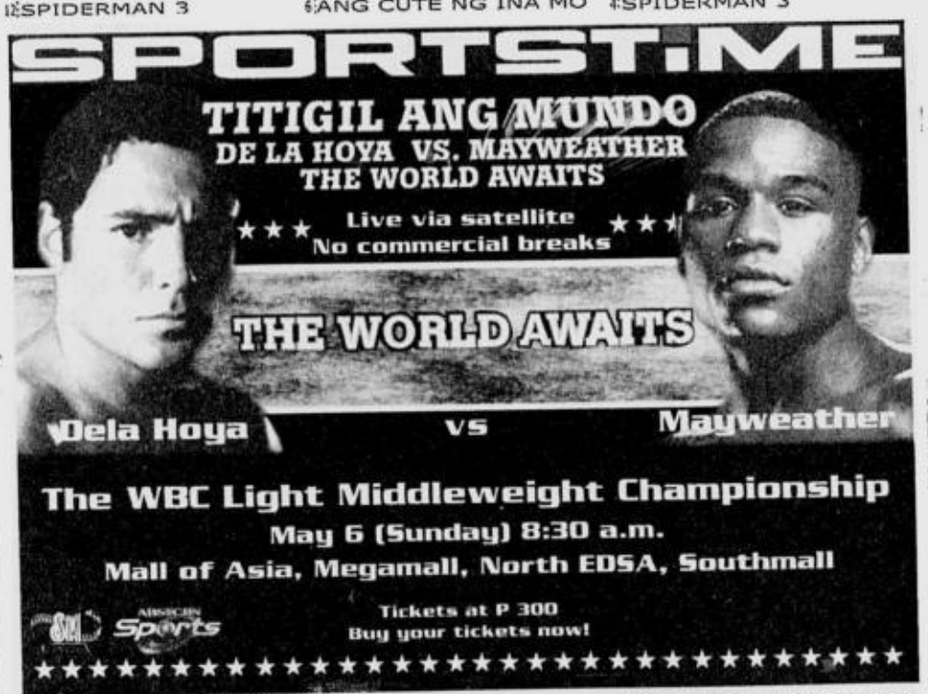
SPORTSTIME



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4 SPIDERMAN 3
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SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
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LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637081-85
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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7 SPIDERMAN 3/ PATHFINDER

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 SPIDERMAN 3
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3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ENTERTAINMENT

'Interactive' film in the offing

Three directors, with diverse backgrounds and orientations, team up for new movie

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THREE DIRECTORS, WITH DIVERSE BACKgrounds and orientations, are teaming up for a planned movie entitled "Boy Next Door/Girl Next Door."

William Mayo, president of the Kapisanan ng mga Direktor sa Pelikulang Pilipino (KDPP), is set to meg one episode, while "Nuts Entertainment" and "Takeshi's Castle" director Soxie Topacio and independent filmmaker Paolo Villaluna, have been tapped to handle the remaining two installments of the movie billed as "interactive."

According to producers from Earth Moving Pictures, "interactive" means that "each director will be given creative freedom to tell his story and realize his vision through any point of view. All three segments may be presented autonomously of one another or may intertwine during the editing phase of the production."

Known as an action director, Mayo directed "Lapu-Lapu," starring Sen. Lito Lapid in 2002. Topacio's latest film was "Reyna" and Villaluna, "Ilusyon"—both under Viva Films.

Topacio says that, for him, the "interactive" format entails a lot of "brainstorming."

The "common thread" in the three stories can be "the search for the girl next door," Topacio explains. "From there, the concept can take the crime story route. Or it can become a romantic comedy. It can also turn into an action or political drama, assuming that the girl next door is the kept woman of a corrupt politician!"

For his part, he says that he's set "to utilize the improvisational process."

Improvisation, Topacio admits, requires a certain level of maturity and intelligence among the actors since they'll be expected to "think on their feet and ad-lib."

That can be tricky because the film top-bills two newcomers.

SOXIE Topacio: Think improvisation

The new movie will launch "Boy Next Door" Chino Narvacan, who will be paired with a new actress, to be chosen in a contest called Girl Next Door 2007.

"The biggest challenge is how to make neophytes shine, considering that there are so many aspiring actors in the industry now," Topacio admits. "I haven't worked with Chino yet, but once I meet with him, I'll assess his strengths and weaknesses as an actor and proceed from there. Maybe I can recommend additional workshops."

Narvacan is currently studying acting under Edna May Landicho and Paul Santiago. He is also taking voice lessons in Boses Training and Recording Studio.

INTERACTIVE/ E3

Indie filmmakers need a helping hand

There is little place for independents on the regular theater circuits

FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, NEW FILMMAKers and their digital movies have been trying to break into the mainstream cinema circuit.

Alas, aside from a few relative hits like "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," most digital productions have done poorly in mainstream release.

What's going on? What are the factors that help explain the lack of success in the important ongoing effort to fuse digital and mainstream filmmaking, distribution and release?

What can be learned from the generally unhappy experience to date, to come up with adjustments and remedies to make things easier for new filmmakers in the years to come?

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

A new filmmaker who went through the entire process months ago shares these experimental insights:

(Some?) theater owners are still of the mentality that a film must do well at the box office on its opening day (Wednesday). People willing to support alternative movies with their hard-earned money come from the workforce; since they work on weekdays, they are not present during the crucial first two days of a digital movie's release.

If the film does not make an impact at the start of its run, theater managers change its time slot—either they show it in the first screening slot (between 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.), or at the last screening at 9 p.m. Both times, the target audience is still not catered to.

No mainstream

Digital films that use DVD as their screening format are not really for mainstream cinema. DVD is for home use. We've checked every digital cinema from Cebu, Davao, Pampanga to Metro Manila, and their set-up is not the "industrial" type.

The projectors bog down and DVD players cannot "read" the discs. We even had to bring a DVD player to a theater for the screenings there to push through.

Hollywood lords it over the promos inside the malls. As independent producers, we had to visit every mall to check if the posters and tarpaulins were being displayed. Most of the time, priority is given to Hollywood productions.

We've discussed alternative screening circuits in schools. Yes, they are a captive market, but most schools prefer to have free screenings. How can a filmmaker survive? He has to look for organizations or philanthropists willing to sponsor the screenings.

Studios have the machinery that helps explain why they're successful at the box office.

No choice

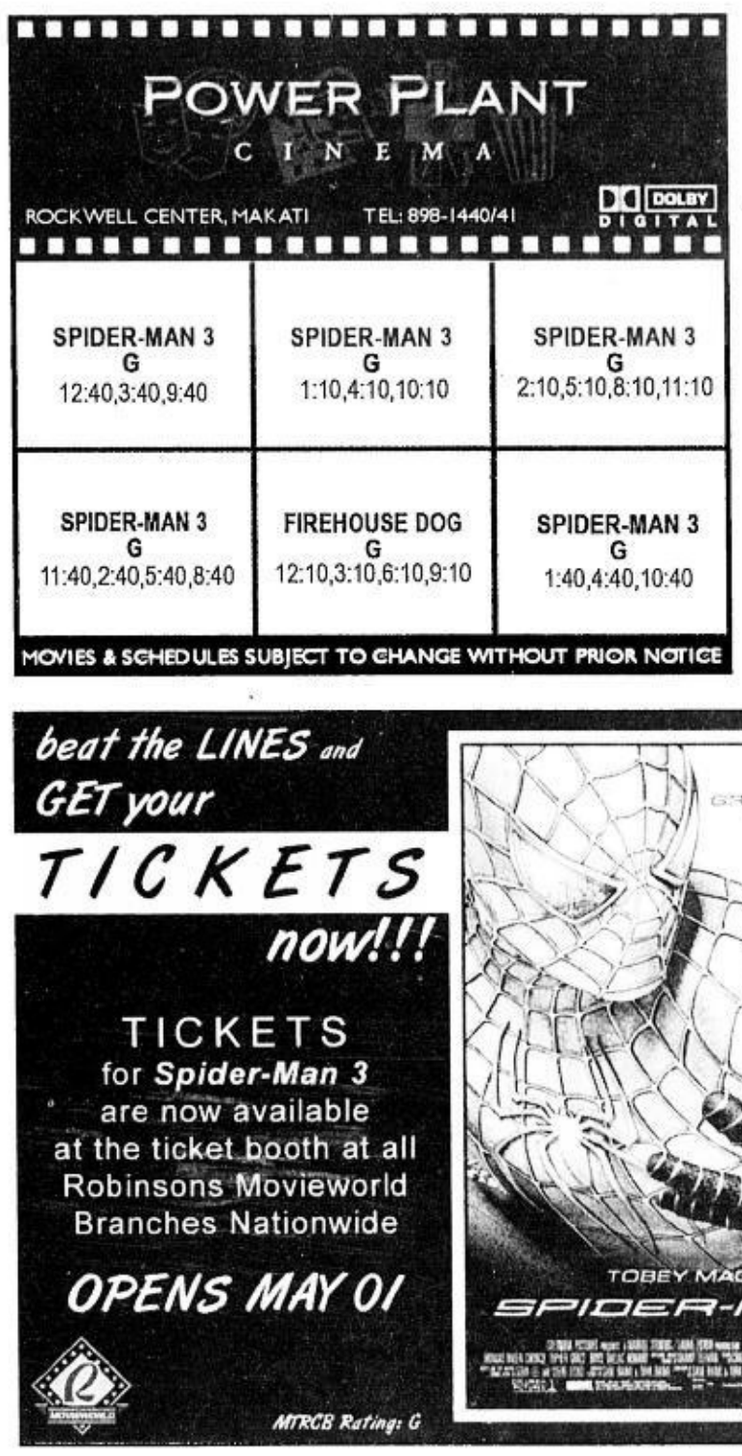
So, viewers are generally left with no choice but to watch local films in only a few genres, like horror, teen romance and sexy gay films, because they make money.

It isn't likely that the mentality of theater owners and traditional producers will change—business is business. We hope that other new digital films currently in release will do better, but we've checked their screenings and they now have fewer time slots as well.

After receiving those inputs from "the voice of (sad) experience," what can we see as possible solutions to the ongoing and pervasive problem?

First, theater owners should be willing to sit down with independent filmmakers to discuss the current situation, and what can be done

INDIE/ E3



LIFESTYLE / D1

Filipino designer
Josie Natori makes headlines in US again

METRO / A25

Binay says Makati
paralyzed by BIR seizure of its assets

NEWS / A11

1 killed, 30 hurt in QC
hotel blaze that was raging as of press time

NEWS / A4

Sen. Serge Osmeña
rushed to hospital, undergoes angioplasty

NEWS / A8

JIL hits demolition
of its church inside Villamor Air Base

Esperon 'clueless' why he is likened to Ver

By Christine O. Avendaño

ARMED FORCES CHIEF of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. does not get it.

He cannot understand why former Senate Presi-

ESPERON/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, May 4, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 145 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

SC orders Comelec: Name party-list nominees

By Leila B. Salaverria and Jerome Aning

UPHOLDING THE PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTIONAL right to information and the need for transparency in government, the Supreme Court ordered the Commission on Elections to immediately disclose the names of the party-list nominees or face contempt.

SC ORDERS/ A22

Cory's phone bugged

PLDT crew discovers 'crude' device

THE ICON OF PEOPLE POWER had long suspected it, and now her suspicion has been proven true.

A bugging device connected to the telephone line of former President Corazon Aquino at her Quezon City residence was found on Wednesday by servicemen, who immediately informed her about it.

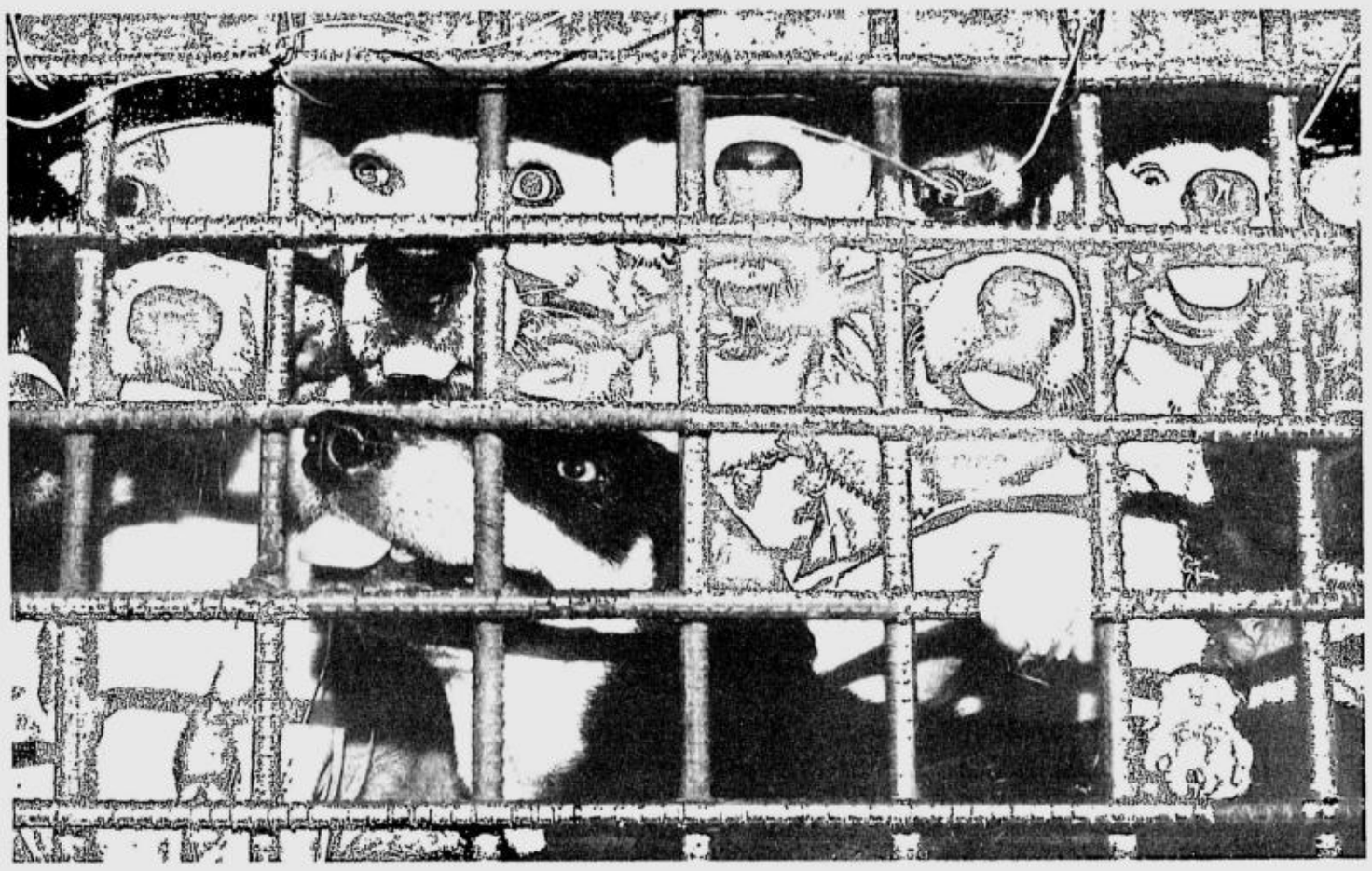
The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. confirmed the discovery of the device, which both National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales and Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, director of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD), described as "very crude."

The discovery further heated up the political atmosphere, with Aquino's only son, Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, yesterday demanding that the government do something about it.

"We are challenging the government to take the necessary steps to arrest [the persons behind] this new discovery," Noynoy Aquino told reporters on the sidelines of a Jesus Is Lord Movement assembly.

Citing Article 3 of the Constitution and the Anti-Wiretapping Law, Noynoy Aquino said bugging violated the privacy of an individual and added that other opposition candidates could be "targets" as well.

CORY'S/ A22



DEADLY TIMES EVEN FOR MAN'S BEST FRIEND

About 115 dogs in cages inside a jeepney were seized by authorities at A. Bonifacio, Quezon City, on their way to Baguio City from Rosario, Batangas. They were to be reportedly sold in the capital of the Mountain Province where dog meat is a local delicacy. The rescued dogs are now in the City Pound Division, Office of the City Veterinarian, Manila.

RAFFY LERMA

Anti-Marcos 'stars' to join indignation rally for Burgos son

By Margaux C. Ortiz, Allison W. Lopez and Jocelyn R. Uy

AS INDIGNATION MOUNTED OVER the abduction of Jonas Joseph Burgos allegedly by security forces, friends and foes alike closed ranks yesterday, lighting candles over the grave of his father, world press icon Joe Burgos, and preparing to march today in protest.

Among those joining the march is the human rights group Mabini, many of whose members were in the Corazon Aquino Cabinet and some who are now in the Arroyo administration. Also scheduled to attend are party-list groups Akbayan and Bayan Muna and the media colleagues of Joe Burgos.

Supporters trooped to the family farm in San Miguel, Bulacan, where Joe Burgos is buried, said his widow Edith.

"They laid flowers on the grave of my late husband, who is buried in one of the hills there, to commemorate World Press

ANTI-MARCOS/ A22

Filipino killed in Baghdad rocket attack

By Tarra Quismundo

A FILIPINO WORKING FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVernment was killed in a rocket attack on Iraq's heavily fortified Green Zone, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

In a statement, the department said it was able to confirm only one Filipino fatality, not four as reported by the US Embassy in Baghdad. The Filipino's name was not immediately known.

It was the third straight day that extremists used rockets and mortars to hit the area where Iraq's parliament meets, according to The Associated Press.

It cited the embassy as saying that Wednesday's attack left it "with a profound sense of sadness and regret" over the loss of the Filipino.

"These four colleagues, citizens of the Philippines, were integral members of our embassy community," US Charge d'Affaires Daniel Speckhard was quoted as saying.

"We value their contributions to our efforts on behalf of the people of Iraq, and we mourn their passing."

In a statement released shortly after news of the rocket attack broke in Manila, Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Esteban Conejos Jr. said the lone

FILIPINO/ A10

8 Filipino workers kidnapped in Nigeria

By Tarra Quismundo

ARMED MEN KIDNAPPED EIGHT FILIPINOS WORKing in a power plant in Nigeria before dawn yesterday, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

Citing initial reports from the Philippine Embassy in the Nigerian capital of Abuja, Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Esteban Conejos

8 FILIPINO/ A10

Texas Instruments picks RP over China for $1-B plant

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

CHOOSING THE PHILIPPINES OVER China, Texas Instruments Inc., the world's biggest maker of mobile phone chips, will build a $1-billion semiconductor facility in the Clark Freeport Zone, a development that President Macapagal-Arroyo dubbed a vote of confidence in the country.

"We are happy to announce one of the single biggest investments in our economic history—the expansion of Texas Instruments in the Clark Freeport Zone (CFZ) in the amount of $1 billion," Ms Arroyo said yesterday at the Malacañang reception hall after she met with TI and Cabinet and CFZ officials.

A day before Ms Arroyo announced the huge investment, Malacañang said the President was going to make a "major announcement" and invited the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines and the Manila Overseas Press Club to cover the event yesterday morning.

She said the TI facility would cover eight hectares and employ more than 3,000 workers, and double the capacity of TI's existing plant in Baguio City which has been in operation for 28 years.

"We thank Texas Instruments for its continuing confidence in the Philippines. Competition was fierce among the different possible sites in Asia, all wanting to put the $1 billion in their places," Ms Arroyo said.

TEXAS/ A18

A BEAMING President Arroyo announces the good news at the Palace. Behind are Texas Instruments senior vice president Kevin Ritchie (left) and Trade Secretary Peter Favila.

LYN RILLON

GMA vowed to distribute Mike A's sugar lands

FARMER POWER: Farmers held a protest rally last December at the Department of Agriculture office in Quezon City. RAFFY LERMA

By Fernando del Mundo

(First of three parts)

FOUR MONTHS AFTER GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo rose to power in 2001, she vowed to redistribute her husband's sugar plantations to give meaning to agrarian reform, centerpiece of a government program to extricate millions of Filipinos from the poverty trap and promote social justice.

"I am not preaching communism. I am invoking Christian love and charity," Ms Arroyo proclaimed four months after she became president. "True justice, development, democracy and reconciliation will not happen without the willingness of the elite to share or give up some of the wealth and power."

Using the revolutionary language of leftist movements urging land reform from Latin America to Asia, Ms Arroyo made her promise after impoverished followers of ousted President Joseph Estrada rampaged in Manila and nearly toppled her in what became known as the failed "Edsa Tres."

AGRARIAN REFORM -TEAM *Report*

The promise has a somewhat hollow ring to it today—a year before the expiration of the land acquisition drive under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) that President Corazon Aquino, fresh from the triumph of the People Power Revolution, promulgated in 1988.

Aquino's 6,453-hectare Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac ironically was the first beneficiary of a corporate arrangement under CARP to weasel out of the program by introducing the "stock distribution option"

GMA/ A23

Mike A drops 17 libel cases vs journalists

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SAYING HE WANTED TO STAY IN TOUCH with God for giving him a new lease on life, President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband yesterday said he would drop all the libel cases he had filed against scores of Filipino journalists.

In a two-page statement read by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo said he wanted to make peace with his detractors after surviving

MIKE A/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2007

EZ2 SIX DIGIT
3 11 | 1 1 7 3 3 5
Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
5 8 7 | 3 8 3
(All in exact order)
SUPERLOTTO 6/49
7 16 23 25 44 47
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/03/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

UNO bucks LP nomination

Comelec chair orders review of selection of dominant minority party

By Jerome Aning

THE UNITED OPPOSITION (UNO) YESTERDAY said it would contest the Commission on Elections' selection of the Liberal Party as the dominant minority party which would be entitled to a copy of the election returns (ERs) in the May 14 polls.

UNO counsel Sixto Brillantes Jr. questioned the Comelec's computation of party statistics, saying it counted the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino's numbers separately when the PMP was part of the UNO coalition.

"The selection process appears to have been rigged. This is a serious matter for the opposition and we will file a motion for clarification and correction," Brillantes said in a phone interview.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. in a separate interview said he had asked the poll body's law department to study the computations.

"I'm ordering a review," he said.

Abalos also rejected Brillantes' accusation of rigging, saying: "If they think we were wrong, they should have called our attention formally and we would have looked into their basis."

He recalled the Comelec had repeatedly told the opposition parties "to get their act together to spare us in the Comelec a major headache," after the Comelec had a hard time figuring out which party belonged to the opposition since some of them claimed to have candidates running under administration parties.

On May 2, the Comelec passed Resolution No. 7877 designating the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and the LP as the dominant majority and minority parties, respectively.

In coming up with its decision, the Comelec took into account the parties' showing in previous elections, the number of their members who were incumbent officials and those running in the May 14 polls, and their national organizational structures.

The resolution also named UNO, PMP, Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino, Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, Nationalist People's Coalition and Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino as the other major parties entitled to watchers in precincts and canvassing centers.

Brillantes said he could not understand why the Comelec had separate statistics for UNO and PMP. In the resolution, he said, UNO and PMP had 1,938 and 1,208 candidates, respectively, which if combined would be more than the LP's 3,089.

He said UNO had no problem with the LP since the Genuine Opposition had an arrangement with the LP to share the ERs, which would list the vote tallies of the polling precincts.

The lawyer said UNO, composed of the PMP and the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Laban, had registered as a coalition and was certified as such by the Comelec in December last year.

"They had months to study (the selection process); they apparently didn't do their homework," he said.

Loren denies junking mates

By Norman Bordadora and Kristine L. Alave.

GENUINE OPPOSITION CANDIdate Loren Legarda yesterday denied having junked anyone of her teammates in the wake of reports that a GO candidate had dropped three fellow GO candidates who coincidentally figured in the top four slots in recent surveys.

Legarda said she could not do that to Senate President Manuel Villar, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, and particularly not to Escudero who is her godson.

"If you look closely at my campaign materials, I have the names of my fellow candidates in the GO also written on them. Even my campaign letterhead includes their names," Legarda said.

Lacson said a Pangasinan mayor had told him that a GO candidate had left out his name and those of Villar and Escudero from the sample ballots that the candidate had printed. He did not name Legarda but subsequent reports mentioned her name.

Escudero urged everyone in the slate to keep calm and stay united in the remaining weeks of the campaign.

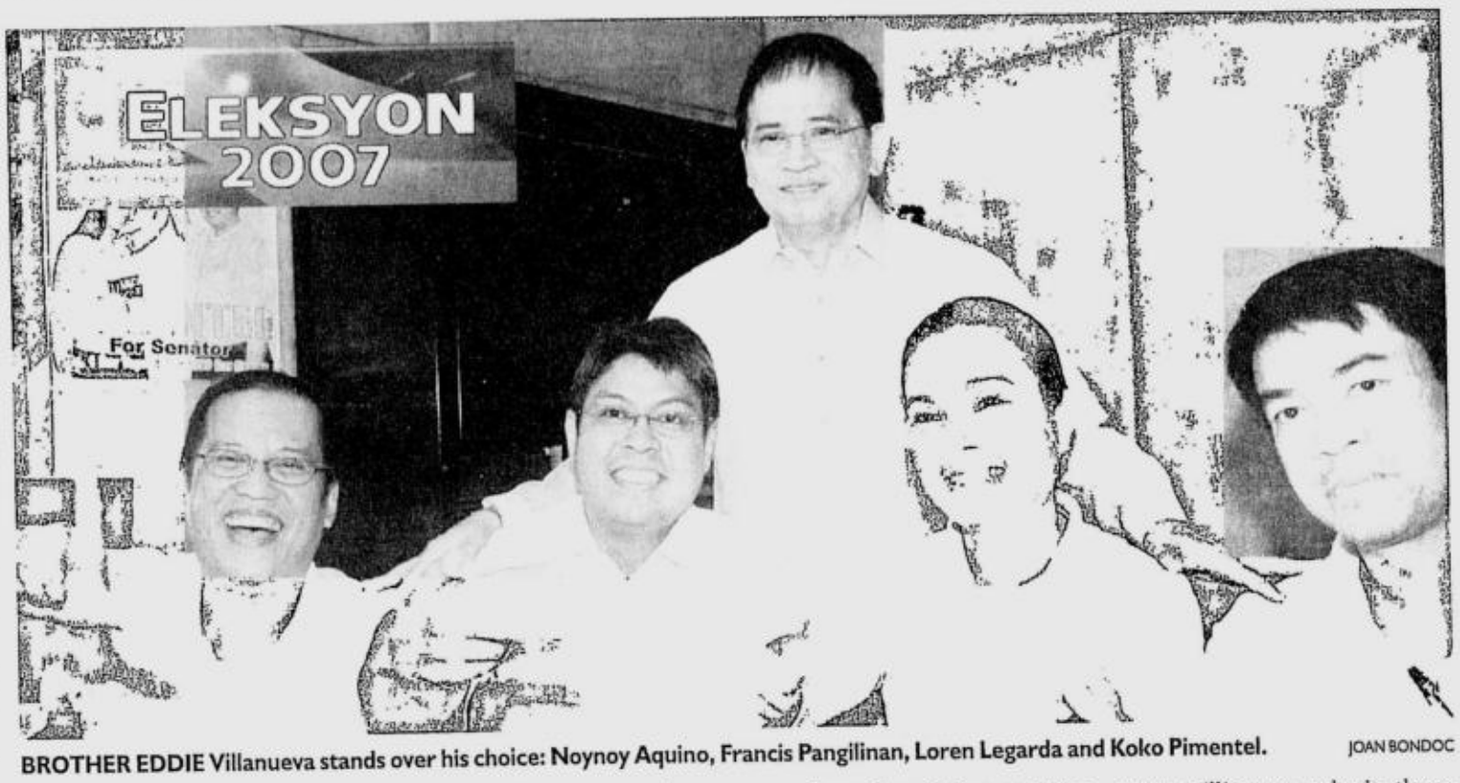
"Sometimes, our rivals sow intrigue for us allies to turn on each other. It is important for us not to jump to conclusions," he said.

Meanwhile, three more opposition senatorial candidates and one independent have been added to the list of candidates being supported evangelist Eddie Villanueva and his group of evangelical organizations which include, besides the Villanueva-led Jesus is Lord Movement, the Philippines for Jesus Movement, Bangon Pilipinas Movement and the Intercessors for the Philippines group.

In a press briefing, Villanueva said his group was endorsing GO candidates Rep. Benigno Aquino III, Legarda and Aquilino Pimentel III.

Villanueva is also throwing his support for independent candidate Francis Pangilinan.

The new endorsement made the religious coalition's line-up an all-opposition group. Last month, Villanueva endorsed Senate President Manuel Villar, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Representatives Alan Peter Cayetano and Francis Escudero.



BROTHER EDDIE Villanueva stands over his choice: Noynoy Aquino, Francis Pangilinan, Loren Legarda and Koko Pimentel. JOAN BONDOC

Villanueva said it could not be helped that their choices were all opposition candidates as the administration-backed Team Unity had snubbed them.

Bishop Leo Alconga, national vice-chair of the PJM and a member of the selection panel, said the group was open to endorsing Team Unity candidates.

The candidates were chosen because they are God-fearing, competent, patriotic, principled, and have good character, courage, and compassion for the poor, he said.

The coalition's total membership is estimated at about 5 million. Villanueva said they expect at least 76 percent of their flock to vote for the candidates endorsed by their leaders.

Pimentel said the millions of votes from the religious coalition would propel him to the top 12.

"I am now out of *dagdag-bawas* territory," he said.

Villanueva said a TU candidate topped the competency evaluation during the group's preliminary review. Another TU candidate also showed high marks in terms of courage.

For the past month, Alconga said they have received "feelers" from TU candidates, saying they were willing to submit themselves to the interrogation process of the selection committee. He said the panel even scheduled meetings with the TU candidates.

"We have been waiting for them, but they didn't show up. Maybe they think President Macapagal-Arroyo's endorsement is enough," he said.

Alconga said the group would announce another batch of favored candidates next week.

Give me a break, Defensor pleads

By Cynthia D. Balana

DAPITAN CITY—ENOUGH IS enough.

Saying he was the most criticized senatorial candidate during the campaign, Team Unity's Michael Defensor yesterday appealed to the "spin masters" to give him a break.

Speaking to reporters traveling with the Team Unity Mindanao caravan at the home of Rep. Cecilia Jalosjos-Carreon in Zamboanga del Norte, Defensor said he was tired of having to defend himself against the brickbats thrown at him for the controversies being laid at his feet.

"I realized after one-and-a-half months of campaigning that I was the most-hit candidate," Defensor said.

He said most of the issues raised against him were not true.

He said his low ranking in the surveys was largely due to the black propaganda being spread through text messages and statements by people who did not want him to win.

"I'm hoping the people's negative sentiments about me would change in the last days of the campaign," he said.

What went wrong

Asked what went wrong in his campaign, Defensor said "nothing," except that he was identified with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Identified *ako kay* GMA *tingin ko* (It was my being identified with [the President] I think). People feel that in Team Unity, I represent, symbolize the administration," he said.

But, he said, his being pro-administration was also an advantage on the campaign trail.

"Many like what I've said and done. Everything I've done, I did not for my personal interest but for the country. That is why in my campaign speeches I ask the people to help me because I feel that I am the most criticized candidate," he said in Filipino.

Defensor cited as an example his negotiations with the rebel military officers during the Oakwood mutiny in 2003 and the failed coup d'etat in February last year.

No regrets

"I entered Oakwood to negotiate so that no one would get hurt and there would be minimal damage to property. Did we hear from the opposition? No. On Feb. 24, 2006, there was a coup attempt. Did they [opposition] speak up? Imagine if the coup succeeded. There would have been trouble, maybe even civil war. So for all the things I stood for and did, I have no regrets," he said, also in Filipino.

On his reported rift with fellow TU candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson, Defensor said it was a closed case because it was not true.

He said he never called Singson or TU party mates Cesar Montano and Sultan Jamalul Kiram "weak candidates" or said that independent senatorial candidate Gregorio Honasan might replace one of them after the latter was released on bail from detention on mutiny charges.

He said Singson's daughter was his godchild and their families were close to each other.

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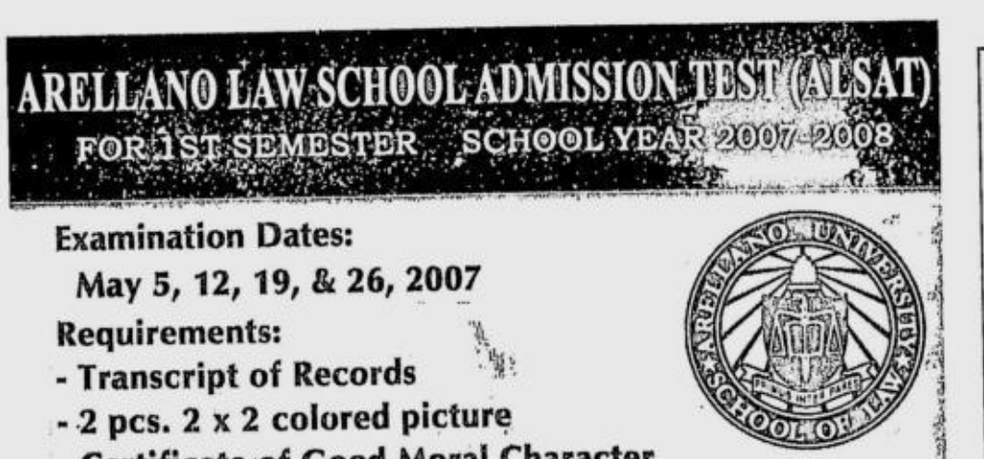

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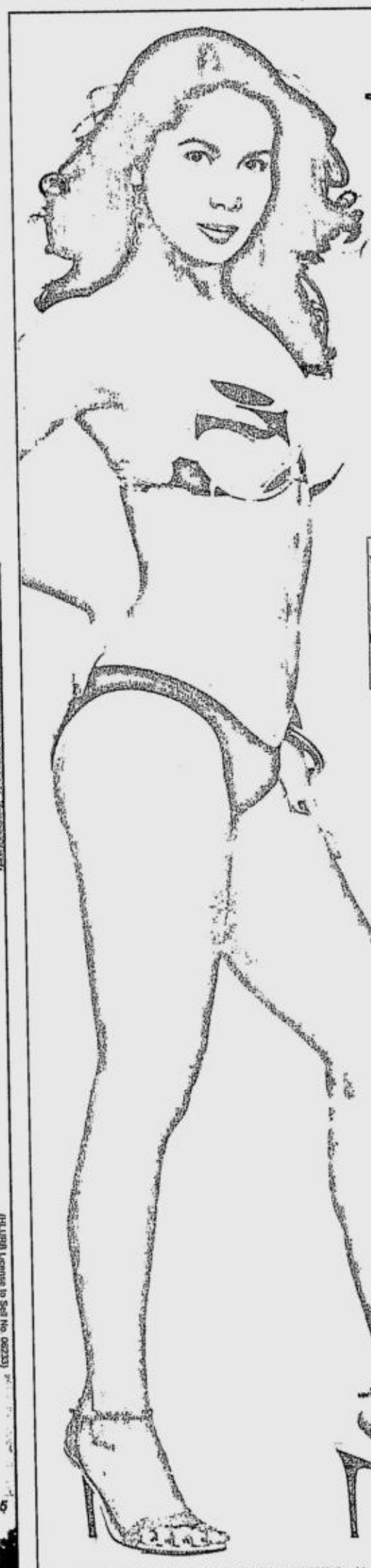

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Serge O rushed to hospital, undergoes angioplasty

SEN. SERGIO OSMEÑA III, THE CAMPAIGN manager of the Genuine Opposition senatorial ticket, was rushed to the hospital yesterday complaining of "chest pains" and immediately underwent angioplasty procedure.

GO spokesman Adel Tamano said Osmeña was recovering from the one-hour procedure and would stay in the hospital overnight.

Osmeña was brought to the Makati Medical Center at about 4:15 p. m. from his office at the Senate building in Pasay City, according to sources in the GO campaign headquarters.

Just an hour before, Osmeña left the GO campaign headquarters in Makati to go to his Senate office. He was at his office when he experienced chest pains, GO sources said.

"He is conscious. He is still working and giving instructions," Tamano said in a press briefing at the GO headquarters last night.

Osmeña himself called up ANC to postpone a scheduled guesting last night.

Senate doctors had suspected Osmeña strained himself by carrying heavy objects at his Senate office. When he experienced chest pains, the resident doctor recommended that he be rushed to the hospital.

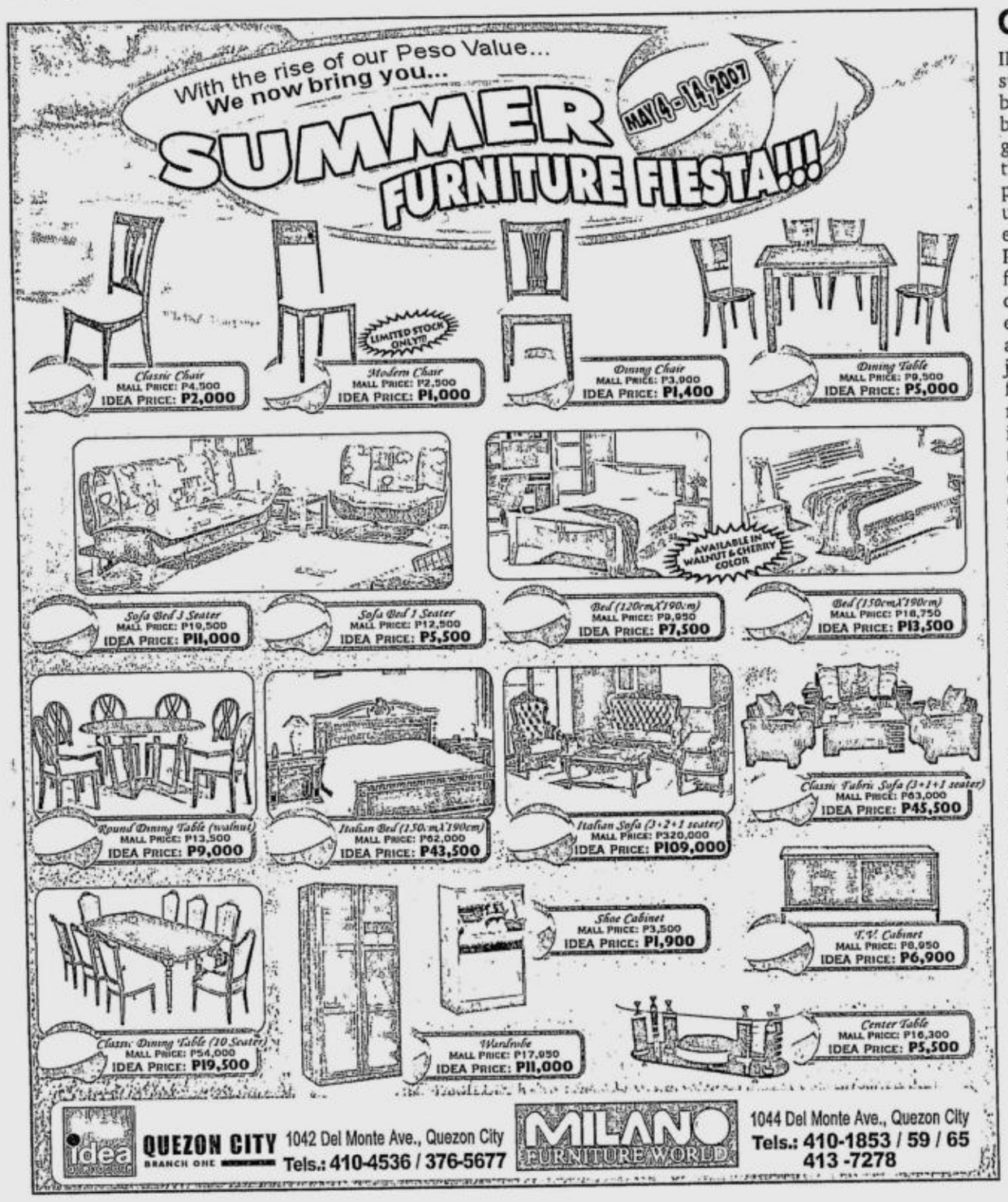
"He will not report for work tomorrow. It will depend on his recovery," Tamano said.

Osmeña took over as GO campaign manager last March, replacing San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito.

He reorganized the campaign strategy, doing away with team campaign sorties and urging the candidates to concentrate on increasing their presence in the media.

As a result, the 11 official GO candidates have been campaigning on their own.

Osmeña also moved the campaign headquarters to the Manila Bank building on Ayala Ave. from the Shaw Blvd. office of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, the political party of deposed President Estrada. *Dona Pazzibugan*



Correction

IN THE MAY 2 ISsue, the front-page banner story—"Labor rejects GMA's gift"—misstated that President Macapagal-Arroyo's executive order would exempt workers P10,500 a month from paying the income tax. Workers earning P10,500 and below would just be exempted from paying thé monthly withholding tax—that is, their monthly income tax will not be deducted from their monthly pay. However, these workers will pay a lump sum representing the corresponding tax on their monthly wage when they file their income tax return.

* * *

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One of 2 voters says it's OK to take money, if...

ONE IN TWO REGISTERED VOTers think that it is not wrong to accept money from candidates so long as one votes "according to one's conscience," a recent survey from the Social Weather Stations found.

Asked for their opinion on the statement, "In an election, it is not bad to accept money provided one votes according to one's conscience," 50 percent agreed, 32 percent disagreed, while 16 percent were undecided. the

Those in the rural areas (56 percent) were found to be more likely to approve of accepting money, compared to those in urban areas (43 percent), according to the SWS April 2007 pre-election survey released yesterday.

Fifty-four percent in the Visayas, 51 percent in Mindanao, 49 percent in the rest of Luzon and 45 percent in Metro Manila also agreed with the statement.

The survey, conducted between April 14 and 17, also showed that seven out of every 10 registered voters (69 percent) expected vote-buying to occur in their areas, while more than one in two (53 percent) expected *dagdag-bawas* (vote manipulation) during the elections.

"Those who agree that it is not bad to accept money in an election are more likely to expect vote-buying this coming election," SWS said in a statement.

Among those who said that it was acceptable to accept money from candidates, 74 percent expected vote-buying, compared to 63 percent among those who disagreed with the statement.

Around four in every 10 registered voters also expected other election irregularities, such as flying voters (46 percent) and voter harassment (39 percent) to mar the coming elections, the survey also revealed.

Belief in the probability of vote-buying happening in their area is highest in the Visayas (74 percent) and among urban residents (73 percent).

Nearly seven in 10 voters in Mindanao (68 percent), the rest of Luzon (68 percent), Metro Manila (67 percent) and among rural residents (67 percent) also shared this belief.

Those who finished college (75 percent) and high school (74 percent) were also more likely to expect vote-buying in their areas, compared to those with an elementary education (63 percent) or even less formal schooling (63 percent).

Meanwhile, belief in the probability of *dagdag-bawas* and flying voters was highest in Metro Manila, with two-thirds of NCR voters expecting to have flying voters (66 percent) and cheating during the counting of the votes (66 percent).

Urban voters (60 percent) were also more likely to think that *dagdag-bawas* would happen in their areas, compared to rural voters (47 percent). More urban voters also expect flying voters in their place, compared to rural voters (57 percent vs. 38 percent).

Fifty-six percent of voters in the rest of Luzon, 37 percent in the Visayas and 53 percent in Mindanao expected *dagdag-bawas* in their areas, while 49 percent in the balance of Luzon, 44 percent in Mindanao and 30 percent in the Visayas expected flying voters in their place.

Expectation of voter harassment is highest in Mindanao (45 percent), while 37 percent in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon, and 35 percent in the Visayas expect voters to be harassed in their areas. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Cheche Lazaro to get UP Gawad Plaridel

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines College of Mass Communication has announced its choice of Cecilia "Cheche" L. Lazaro to receive the 2007 UP Gawad Plaridel.

The college said Lazaro was chosen for her outstanding contributions to the local television industry, her excellence and versatility in the field of television broadcasting as a journalist, producer and educator, and for producing critical and uncompromising programs that set the standard for Philippine broadcast journalism.

The award comes with a trophy by National Artist Napoleon Abueva which will be presented to Lazaro by UP officials on July 4 at the Cine Adama of the UP Film Institute.

Lazaro will deliver a lecture on the important issues in contemporary Philippine television.

Established by the UP College of Mass Communication, the annual Gawad Plaridel recognizes Filipino media practitioners who have excelled in any of the media (print, radio, film, television and new media) and have performed with the highest level of professional integrity in the interest of public service.

On its fourth year, Gawad Plaridel's roster of honorces include Eugenia Duran-Apostol (2004), Vilma Santos (2005) and Fidela Magpayo (2006) who were recognized for their contributions to print, film and radio, respectively.

The award is named after Marcelo H. del Pilar, who used the pen name Plaridel, the selfless propagandist whose stewardship of the reformist newspaper La Solidaridad helped crystallize nationalist sentiment and ignite libertarian ideas in the 1890s.

Like Plaridel, a recipient of the award must believe in the vision of a Philippine society that is egalitarian, participative and progressive, and in a media that is socially responsible, critical and vigilant, liberating and transformative, free and independent, the award's creators said.

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Friday, May 4, 2007
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1st Reading: Acts 13:26-33
Gospel: John 14:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not be troubled; trust in God and trust in me. In my Father's house there are many rooms. Otherwise I would not have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. After I have gone and prepared a place for you, I shall come again and take you to me, so that where I am, you also may be. Yet you know the way where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me."

Commentary

The Good News is starkly simple (and lines and phrases are repeated again and again by Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas and everyone of us): it is the life, the dying and rising of Jesus who is God's beloved Son and his life is now our life in baptism/resurrection if we repent and believe and then do the works of God.

Jesus' words come to comfort us, to relieve us of worry, insecurity, and fear. Our way in life is the way of Jesus, the way to the Father, the way of the cross, the way of resurrection life, the way of God's community that seeks to reveal in their ritual and living that Jesus is 'the way, the truth and the life' of the world. It is up to us in every generation, in each place, to preach this with the power of the Spirit, with our gifts, imagination, and zeal. How are we doing?

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'SLOPPY, TAINTED, PARTISAN WORK'

Team Unity files complaint vs SWS surveys

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ACCUSING THE POLLING ORGANIZation of bias and partisanship, the administration Team Unity has filed a formal complaint against the Social Weather Stations before the leading global organization of survey and communication researchers.

Writing to the World Association for Public Opinion Research, Team Unity media director and Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone accused the SWS of "engaging in unscrupulous trending practices and blatant partnership in favor of the political opposition in the run-up to the Philippine mid-term elections on May 14."

The letter, dated April 30, was addressed to Dr. Allan McCutcheon, general secretary of Wapor.

"In its mercenary work for the political opposition, the SWS has caused the publication (in the guise of voters' preference) of tainted surveys that showed the non-existent and entirely fictional preference of Filipino voters for opposition candidates in the senatorial, congressional and local posts up for grabs in this month's balloting," said Evardone.

Evardone cited an SWS survey that showed that voters preferred opposition candidates in most of the local races.

"The problem is the political opposition has no competitive candidates in 80 percent of local races. In over 200 congressional races at stake in May 14, the local opposition does not have candidates in 68 districts and only 20 percent of its limited candidates are competitive," he said in the letter.

Evardone also accused the SWS of using "slanted and accusatory questions that virtually coerced survey respondents into validating the pro-opposition bias instead of eliciting true voters' preference."

He cited as examples statements like, "PGMA steals from the coffers of the country" and "PGMA will cheat in the coming elections in order for her candidates to win," in which respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed.

Evardone claimed that this particular SWS survey caused such a public "uproar" that it had to admit that the survey was commissioned by Sen. Sergio Osmeña Jr., the campaign manager of the Genuine Opposition coalition.

With its "sloppy, tainted and partisan work," the SWS has failed to give a clear picture of voters' preferences, he said.

"The SWS has done a great disservice to the polling profession and is about to muddle up the Philippine elections in an obvious attempt to condition the public on the supposed victory of the opposition on May 14," said Evardone.

"Polling firms are supposed to carry out clinical and unbiased surveys of voters' sentiment and not to work as a tool in furthering partisan interest. They are supposed to be free from biases and partisanship," he said.

According to Evardone, the SWS has been forced to resort to "mercenary and partisan work" because of financial difficulties. He claimed the polling organization has been abandoned by some of its partners such as the ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and TNS Trends, the outfit that used to do the field work for SWS.

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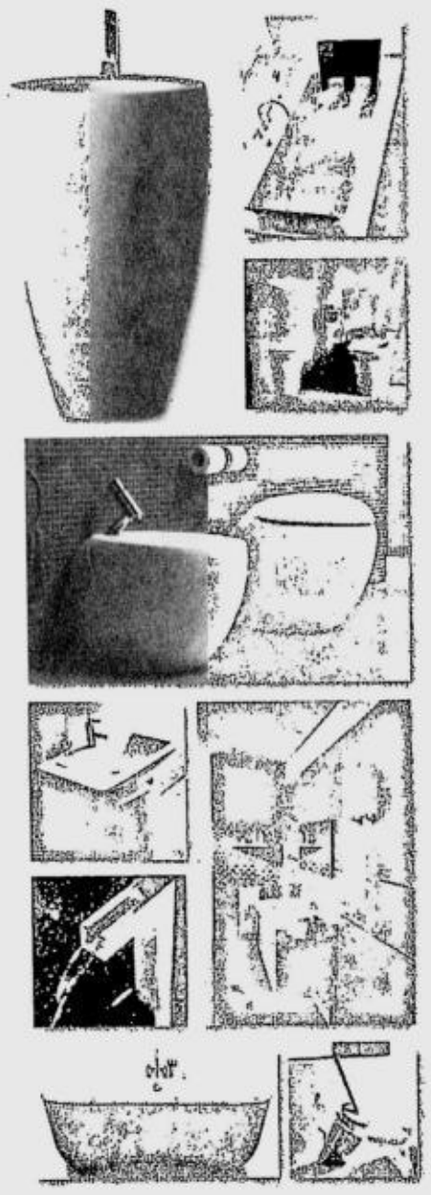

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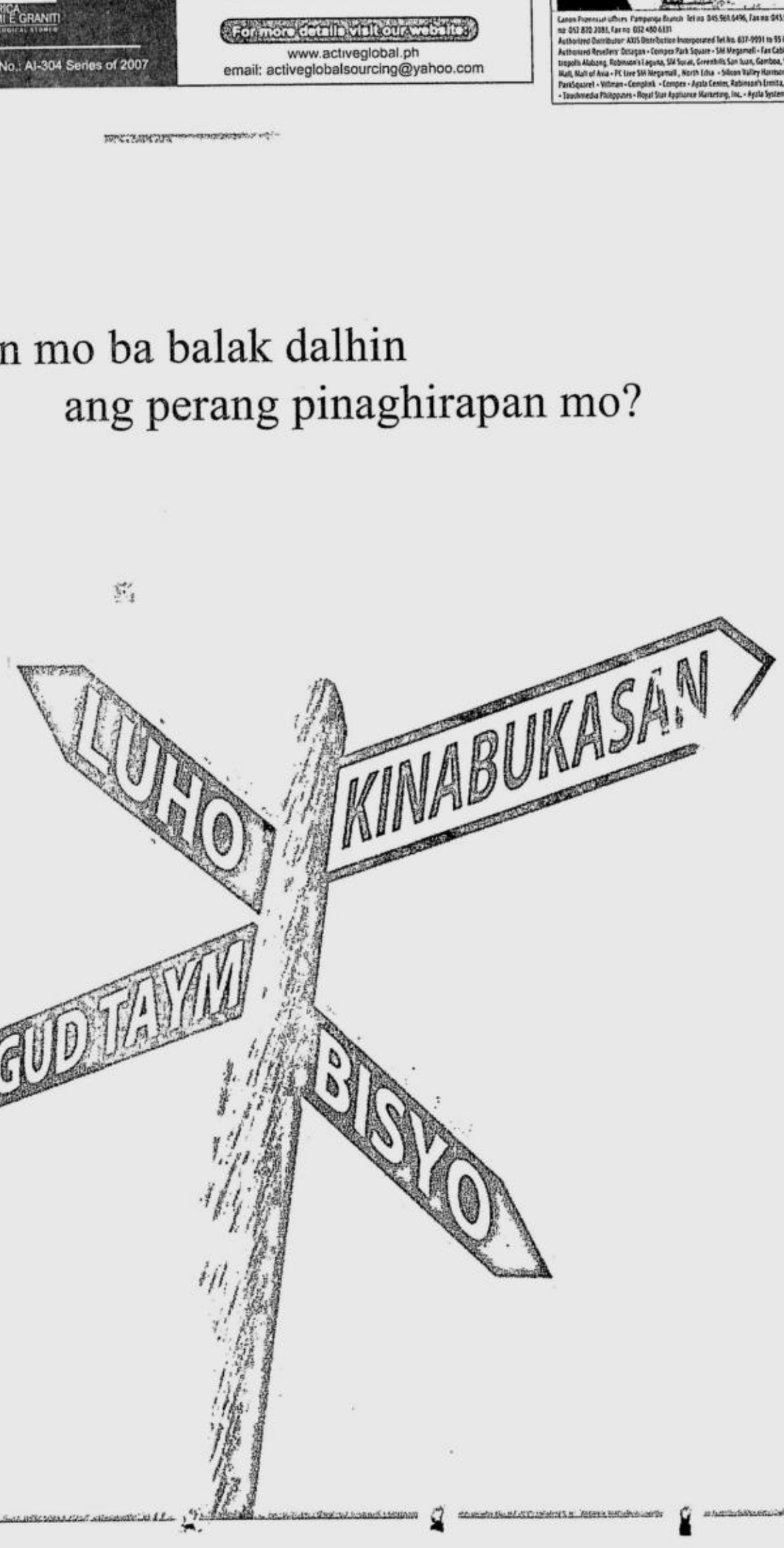

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Team Unity wants teachers 'pre-paid' for poll duty

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

TEAM UNITY YESTERDAY BATTED FOR BETter perks for public school teachers who would be in the front line of the May 14 elections.

TU senatorial bet Ralph Recto yesterday suggested that teachers and other deputized election officers should be "pre-paid" for their poll duties including the transport allowance given to them for bringing voting paraphernalia to the precincts.

Recto said the government could easily advance the fees considering that P3.3 billion of the P5.7 billion allocated by Congress under the 2007 budget for the midterm elections have been allocated for "per diem, allowances, wages and honoraria" of election workers.

With the elections just 11 days away, Recto said arrangements should be now going full blast to ensure that the money has been delivered to the Department of Education field offices before Friday, May 11, the last working day before the May 14 polls.

"When it comes to poll duties pay, teachers should be pre-paid, not post-paid. Or at least, they be paid half in advance, and the balance immediately after the elections. We shouldn't be sending them to battle without paying them first," he said.

Recto said he heard of complaints from teachers who did not received their P1,000 honorarium for weeks after the elections.

Some 510,000 public school teachers are expected to man 310,000 precincts where 45 million voters will troop to cast their votes for national and local election posts.

Another TU senatorial Prospero "Butch" Pichay, called on the government to beef up candidate security and improve the pay of public school teachers.

"As members of the Board of Election Inspectors and Board of Canvassers, teachers will be exposed to various dangers, pressures and stress on election day. It is only right that they be given enough security and compensation better than what they are receiving now," Pichay said.

Pichay noted that some teachers' groups have called on the government to make poll duty voluntary. Pichay said some teachers were wary of the risks in their polling duty especially in hot spots that some have opted to file a leave of absence during election day.

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Trillanes hopes to do a Honasan

THE LAWYER OF DEtained senatorial candidate Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes is hoping his client would experience the same surge of popularity that former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan did upon being released on bail.

"We were encouraged when Honasan was granted bail," said Reynaldo Robles, Trillanes' counsel, after yesterday's bail hearing before Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148.

The lawyer said he expects the court to resolve Trillanes' urgent petition to be allowed to post bail early next week. *DJ Yap*

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VILLAMOR DEMOLITION

Bro. Eddie cries harassment

By Tarra Quismundo

EVANGELIST AND OPPOSITION LEADER Eddie Villanueva has accused the government of harassment over the demolition of the church of his Jesus Is Lord sect inside the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

"Can this be another brazen political harassment? The timing is suspect because JIL has just released the senatorial candidates we will endorse, and all of them are from the opposition," said Villanueva, who has been a vocal critic of President Macapagal-Arroyo since losing the 2004 presidential race to her in 2004.

The JIL church in Villamor is a converted theater which was set up more than 20 years ago for the community of active and retired airmen and their families inside the Philippine Air Force base.

On Tuesday, a demolition team from PAF tore down the JIL church which, Villanueva claimed, resulted in the displacement of a congregation of about 2,000 Villamor residents.

Commercial complex

The building is among several structures that will be affected by a venture to turn 25 hectares of Villamor Air Base into a commercial, residential and recreation complex through a partnership between the state-run Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and the Megaworld Corp.

The BCDA is the agency charged with converting military bases for profitable use. As of March, it has built some P294 million worth of structures for the Air Force in exchange for the land it would take over and convert.

A 1995 memorandum agreement between the BCDA and the Air Force assigns the PAF to "supervise all demolition work" under the redevelopment project, said Gen. Rolando Capacia, chief of the 520th Air Base Wing.

The demolition of the old theater was part of PAF's obligation under the agreement, said Capacia.

"We just let the JIL use [the theater] as their place of worship since 1983. They do not pay rent or anything, and they know that they don't own the place. They knew they already had to leave," Capacia said.

The BCDA explained in a statement that the old theater it agreed in 1999 to allow the JIL to continue using the theater but only "until such time that BCDA will be using the area."

JIL lawyer Jeng Jose said the church had applied for a usufruct, or land use grant for the property which should be approved by a sitting President.

Left unsigned

Tan claimed that Ms Arroyo had baited Villanueva with a signed usufruct for the Villamor lot in exchange for his withdrawal from the 2004 presidential elections.

But because Villanueva went ahead with his presidential bid, the usufruct application was left unsigned in Ms Arroyo's office until the BCDA-Megaworld project included the lot in its development plan, Jose claimed.

Jose said the JIL had started negotiations with Megaworld which offered a temporary relocation site when the demolition was carried out.

But according to Capacia, the JIL refused to move when they learned that the relocation site being offered was only temporary.

"What they want is a permanent relocation site," Capacia said.

Jose said the JIL was discussing what recourse to take to "seek accountability."

"We're sure this is something beyond what is seen...and we will definitely do something about it. It appears that somebody higher that those people are calling the shots," she said.

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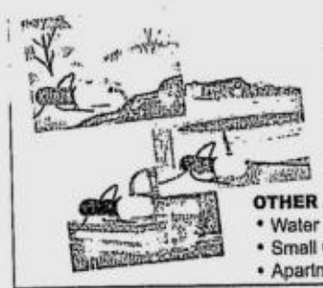

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Comelec control of Cebu's Bantayan island sought

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—POLICE REGIONAL OFFICIALS yesterday recommended placing the entire Bantayan Island under the control of the Commission on Elections in the wake of Wednesday's killing of the mayoral candidate of Sta. Fe, one of the three towns on the island.

They also declared the rest of the fourth congressional district an "area of concern" so that unhampered police presence in northern Cebu could avert bloody confrontations after the death of Sta. Fe Councilor Rogelio Ilustrisimo Sr.

The district, a bailiwick of the Martinez political clan, is composed of nine towns, including Bantayan's Sta. Fe, Madridejos and Bantayan.

Ilustrisimo, a former mayor of Sta. Fe and mayoral candidate of the Lakas CMD, was shot twice in the back of the head by a lone assailant outside the Comelec provincial office here. He had just attended a hearing of the disqualification case filed against him by his opponent, Domingo Zaspa (One Cebu-Kampi).

Senior Supt. Carmelo Valmoria, provincial police chief, said placing Bantayan under Comelec control, not just Sta. Fe, would prevent the possible escalation of violence in view of intense political rivalries between two groups.

Valmoria feared a possible backlash, particularly in Sta. Fe, where supporters of the Ilustrisimo family could try to avenge his death. He asked them to remain calm and wait for the results of police investigation.

Mayor Roger Ilustrisimo, the victim's son, is opposing the police recommendation. He said he did not want to give in to the demand of political opponents to place Sta. Fe under Comelec control.

If a declaration will be made, town officials could no longer give their trust to the new policemen to be assigned in the town, the young Ilustrisimo said. "Comelec control is tantamount to martial law."

Because of the fluid situation in the whole district, he said, it was good to declare the remaining town areas of concern. Intense political rivalries have been noted in the mainland towns of Daanbantayan and Medellin.

More troops from the Regional Mobile Group (RMG) were sent to Bantayan, he said.

Cash reward

Ilustrisimo said his family was asking for investigators from Manila, probably from National Bureau of Investigation, to help in the probe.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo talked to Rep. Clavel Asas-Martinez (fourth district) over the phone on Wednesday evening and assured her of sending investigators to Cebu.

Senior Supt. Patrocinio Comendador, who heads Task Force Ilustrisimo, said the gunman had already been identified based on witness accounts. He refused to name or describe the suspect pending his arrest.

Mayor Tomas Osmeña has offered a P300,000 cash reward to people who could provide information that will lead to the arrest of the suspect.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal called on the police to conduct a "speedy, thorough and courageous investigation, which leaves no stone unturned."

"This spiral of violence must stop. Human lives are more important than temporary political positions and power. Murders do not solve anything," he said.

The remains of Ilustrisimo were brought to Sta. Fe yesterday afternoon. The municipal flag was flown at half-staff.

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Another leftist leader seized

TUGUEGARAO CITY—A MEMBER OF THE leftist Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) in Cagayan Valley has been missing eight days after he was abducted by three armed men in Gattaran town, even as calls that a missing agriculturist be produced mounted yesterday.

Alan Bumanglag, a member of the Kagimungan Dagiti Mannalon iti Cagayan Valley (Kagimungan-CV) and KMP-Cagayan chapter, had been invited by the Army's 17th Infantry Battalion in Baggao town on April 26 for questioning and was on his way home to Gattaran when the armed men seized him, according to local KMP spokesperson Carl Ala.

Since then, Bumanglag, an active campaigner against human rights violations, had not been heard of, Ala said.

Ala tagged the military for the disappearance of Bumanglag. But Col. Juanito Bareng, 17th Infantry Battalion commander, disputed the claim.

"We are not, in any way, involved in the alleged abduction of Bumanglag. At any rate, I will order an investigation of his disappearance," he said.

Bareng said militant groups in the province had been waging a smear campaign on the military after his men found last week a cache of explosives allegedly belonging to New People's Army rebels in Barangay Tanglagan village, 30 km from the Gattaran town proper.

He said the explosives, believed intended by the rebels for use in land mine warfare, were to be employed in blowing up Army vehicles traveling in the area.

Bumanglag's disappearance happened two days after agriculturist Jonas Joseph Burgos went missing in Quezon City last Saturday. *(See related story on Page 1)*

Burgos, 36, son of the late press freedom icon Jose Burgos Jr., had provided technical training to KMP members in Bulacan.

Leftist Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano proposed that the military, instead of issuing a blanket denial to charges it had a hand in the disappearance, accompany Burgos' family to its camps and safe houses.

"It appears that quick denial has become a standard operating procedure of the military," he said in a statement. "We demand that the Armed Forces of the Philippines allow and assist Burgos' relatives and friends in checking military camps and safe houses." *Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon and TJ Burgonio*

Poll watchdog hits cell phone ban

By Jerome Aning

THE ELECTORAL FRAUD WATCHDOG KONtra Daya yesterday said the Commission on Elections' ban on cell phones and cameras inside polling places was nothing but "another ridiculous concoction of the discredited agency."

In a statement, Kontra Daya convenor Fr. Jose Dizon said the ban "was meant to ensure another cover-up of massive fraud even at the precinct level."

Dizon said the prohibition would not prevent vote-buying as Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. claimed.

"Does Chairman Abalos think he can restore the people's trust in the Comelec by banning cell phones and cameras inside precincts?" Dizon said.

"In the first place, vote-buying has been around before cell phones and digital cameras. What makes Abalos think banning these devices will prevent vote-buying?" the activist priest said.

Reacting to the criticism, Abalos clarified that cell phones would not be banned in precincts although election watchers would be alert to make sure they were not used to cheat.

"We cannot ban voters from bringing in cell phones but what we will ban is the use of cell phone cameras to take a photo of one's ballot. If you take a photo of your ballot, what is your purpose?" he said.

Earlier, Abalos had said cell phone and digital cameras could be used to prove that a voter had voted for certain candidates, as a "receipt" so they could claim their payoff.

On the other hand, Dizon said, cell phones and digital cameras in precincts could serve as deterrents to election anomalies by documenting cases of fraud and violence. *With Santiago R. Alcantara*

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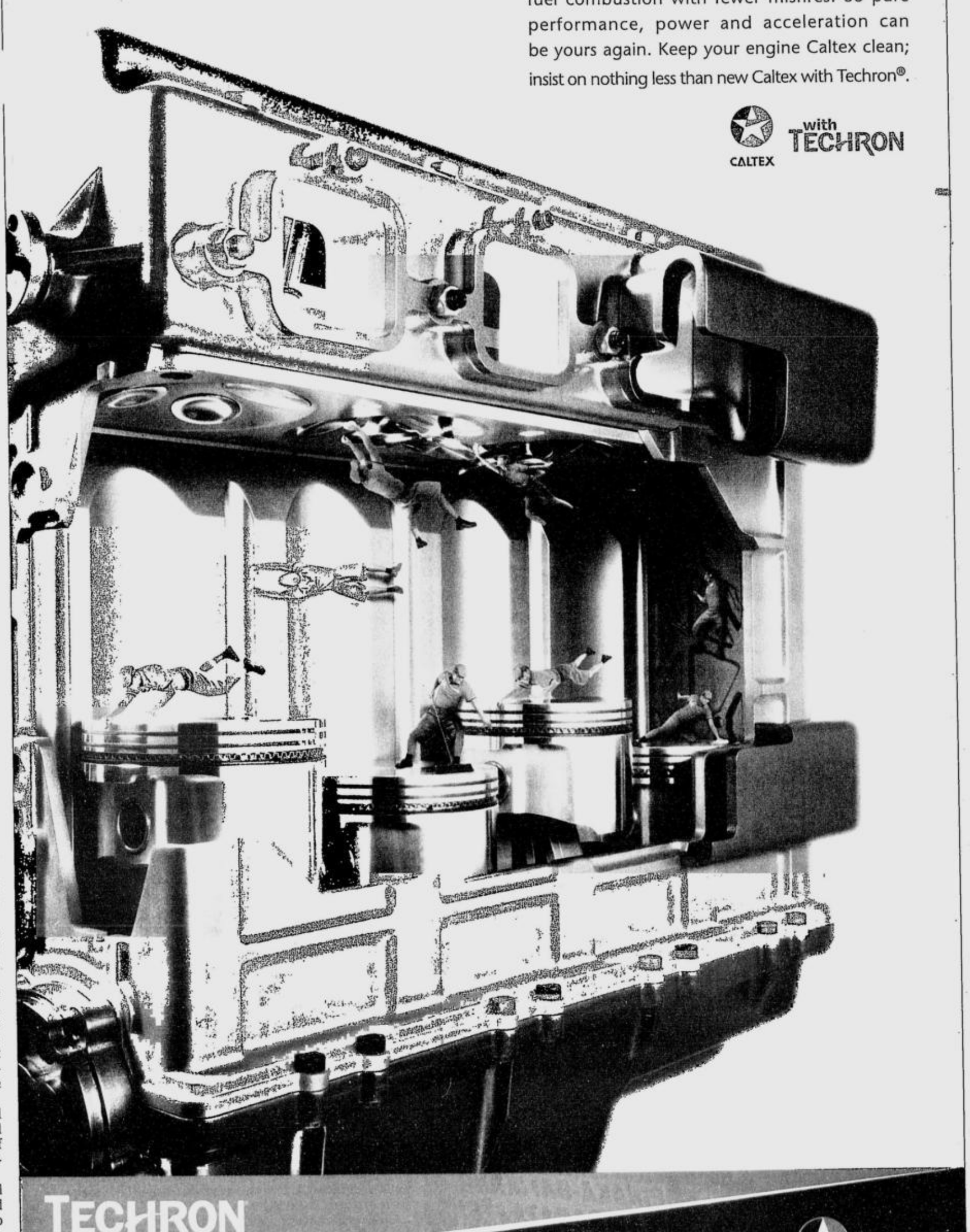

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More bombs kill 3 US soldiers, 85 Iraqis

IN OTHER VIOLENCE IN IRAQ ON WEDNESday, a suicide car bomber struck in the main Shiite district of the capital, killing at least nine people, as the US military said its troop buildup in Baghdad was nearly complete.

Three more US soldiers were killed by bombs in the capital. At least 85 Iraqis were killed or found dead nationwide Wednesday, police reported. They also included eight people who lost their lives when a roadside bomb destroyed their minibus 32.2 kilometers (about 20 miles) south of Baghdad.

Also Wednesday, two US soldiers were killed and two others were wounded when a bomb devastated their vehicle in southern Baghdad, the US command said. Another soldier died in a blast in western Baghdad, it said.

At least 3,354 members of the US military have died since the Iraq war started in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. Last month, at least 104 US service members died—the highest monthly figure since December.

Insurgents and militia fighters routinely fire rockets and mortars into the Green Zone, a sprawling complex which is surrounded with tall cement blast walls on the west bank of the Tigris, but the attacks seldom cause casualties or damage because they are poorly aimed and the zone contains much open space.

But two Americans—a contractor and a soldier—were killed in late March in a rocket attack on the area and two suicide vests were found unexploded less than a week after that.

The adequacy of security in the vast area in central Baghdad more recently came into question in the aftermath of the April 12 suicide bombing in the Iraqi parliament building's dining hall. One lawmaker was killed in the blast, which was claimed by an al-Qaida-led amalgam of Sunni insurgents.

On Wednesday, Rear Adm. Mark Fox, a US military spokesperson, told a news conference that the latest round of Green Zone attacks appears to be part of an overall strategy by extremists "to score a spectacular hit or try to obtain some sort of a headline-grabbing direct hit." *AP*

Filipino killed in Baghdad rocket attack

From page A1

Filipino fatality was confirmed by Chargé d'Affaires Wilfredo Cuyugan of the Jordan-based Philippine Embassy in Baghdad.

"After the media reports came out, Cuyugan called the department to confirm that, although four people were indeed killed in the attack, only one of the casualties was Filipino, the others being of different nationalities," said Conejos.

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday ordered a "quick reassessment" of the country's repatriation plan for workers in Iraq.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo was "saddened by the news" and had asked the DFA to "ensure the immediate repatriation of the remains."

No other details

The brief US Embassy statement provided no other details about the attack, including the time or location of the explosion in the Green Zone, which is home to the US and British embassies and thousands of American troops. Such information often is withheld to avoid giving extremists information for future attacks on the area.

However, the whistle of suspected rockets had been heard passing over the Tigris River in central Baghdad and into the Green Zone on Wednesday evening, the AP said.

The deaths occurred on the same day that a US military spokesperson warned that insurgent gunners were trying "to score a spectacular hit or obtain a headline-grabbing direct hit" on a Green Zone target, according to the AP report.

The Philippines banned deployment of workers to Iraq after insurgents abducted Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz in July 2004.

To save his life, President Macapagal-Arroyo granted the kidnappers' demand for the early withdrawal of a small Philippine peacekeeping contingent from Iraq—a decision strongly criticized by Washington and other allies, but applauded at home.

Deployment ban

A second Filipino, accountant Robert Tarongoy, was also abducted by Iraqi militants. He was freed in June 2005 after almost eight months in captivity.

US military camps across Iraq employ 5,000-6,000 Filipinos, mostly as cooks and maintenance personnel. A smaller number work as bodyguards for businessmen.

Most of these Filipino workers were already in Iraq when the Philippine government imposed the deployment ban.

Despite the ban, many Filipino workers are believed to have slipped into Iraq through neighboring countries like Jordan, prompting the government to appeal to those countries to help block such passage.

Bunye said the ban on Filipinos travelling to Iraq would remain, but nationals who were already there were "urged to take necessary precautions for their safety" while keeping in touch with the embassy there.

He said the foreign office had been asked to "conduct a quick reassessment of the situation to determine if more OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) in Iraq need or want to be repatriated."

Ms Arroyo had earlier created a special task force to look into repatriation plans for those still in Iraq. *Reports from Michael Lim Ubac, AP and AFP*

8 Filipino workers kidnapped in Nigeria

From page A1

Jr. said the Filipinos, among them electricians and welders, were snatched inside the plant in Port Harcourt at around 1:40 a.m.

The names of the Filipinos were being withheld until the DFA had confirmed the incident, Conejos said.

Three Koreans, including a project manager, were also taken in the attack, which occurred just as Philippine officials in Nigeria had noted the improving peace and order situation in the wake of the country's first presidential elections.

In Seoul, the South Korean foreign ministry identified the abductors as Nigerian militants, who seized the victims, including a local driver, after a 40-minute gunfight at the plant construction site.

Construction company officials, however, refused to confirm a report by Yonhap news agency that several people had been killed or injured.

"Three Koreans from Daewoo Engineering and Construction, eight Philippine workers and a Nigerian driver have been kidnapped by a group of armed insurgents," said foreign ministry spokesperson Cho Hee-Yong.

The workers were seized at a power plant construction site near Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta area, he said.

"A gunfight erupted between the insurgents and security guards but there have been no reports of injuries involving South Korean workers as yet," he said.

"I have given instructions to our embassy to immediately send a consular mission to Port Harcourt ... They're going to be there and hopefully by tonight, I should get confirmation from the ground itself on what happened," Conejos told reporters in a briefing in Manila yesterday.

53 Pinoy workers

Fifty-three Filipinos work in the plant, which can be reached in 10 hours by land from Abuja.

Feeding reports to the DFA by phone throughout yesterday, Vice Consul Randy Arquiza of the Philippine mission in Abuja told Conejos that the Korean firm had decided to pull out of the project site at past noon and move to a safe area.

"We have some names but we are still trying to verify this from the master list. We have the complete list of names of OFWs working in the plant, but we will verify this initial information," Conejos said.

A total of 1,755 workers, including 148 Koreans, were at the site which was guarded by Nigerian soldiers and security officials, Daewoo spokesperson Huh Hyon said.

The kidnapped Koreans included Chung Tae-Young, 52-year-old managing director of Daewoo's overseas division who was on a business trip to the area, and two top Daewoo officials in Nigeria, he said.

Chung had twice led a Daewoo task force to secure the release of Koreans kidnapped previously in the district.

An emergency control center staffed by Daewoo officials and South Korean diplomats in Nigeria has been set up to work for the early release of the hostages.

No group came forward immediately to claim the kidnapping in Africa's largest oil-producing nation, said the foreign ministry's Cho, and it was not known if a ransom would be demanded.

Nigerian help

The Philippine foreign office has yet to receive any information on who were behind the abduction and what their demands were. Conejos said it would seek Nigeria's help in negotiating the release of the Filipinos as soon as the abduction was confirmed.

Manila did the same in seeking the release of 24 seafarers kidnapped by armed men off the oil-rich Delta State in Southern Nigeria in January, and of oil worker Winston Helera the following month.

"No group has claimed responsibility at this time, but as I said, remember in the case of the 24 seamen, a lot of groups came forward to claim responsibility for it so I don't want to hazard a guess," Conejos said.

"I have no information yet, no confirmation on the identity of the group, what their demands are, whether it is political or whether it is mercenary or whether it's commercial.

Rich in oil reserves, the Niger Delta area has been at the center of a long confrontation between the government and a militant group known as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

There have been frequent kidnappings of foreign workers in the area in recent years. Nine Daewoo workers were taken hostage in January but were later released unharmed.

The MEND is responsible for at least one previous kidnapping of South Koreans, in which three Daewoo officials and two from South Korea's state-owned gas corporation were abducted in June last year. All five were later freed.

At the height of the Philippine-Nigerian negotiations for the release of the abducted seafarers, Conejos had traveled to the Korean-run Port Harcourt power plant and convinced its management to boost security arrangements there and give Filipino workers the option to come home.

Lift ban or not?

"As the result of that plan, of the total 81 Filipinos in that particular plant site, 28 already came home," Conejos said.

"There were 53 who were also about to be brought home but in fact some of them, because of the relatively peaceful conduct of the election (in April), they were optimistic that things would settle down and they have manifested a desire to remain in Port Harcourt," he said.

Upon confirmation of the latest abduction incident, the official said the DFA would officially inform the Department of Labor and Employment about the incident to aid the agency in deciding on whether to lift the deployment ban on Filipino workers in Nigeria. *With an AFP report*

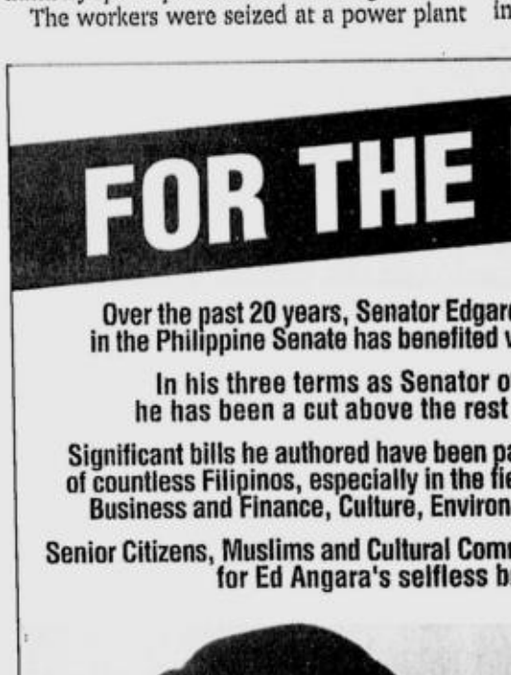
FOR THE RECORD

Over the past 20 years, Senator Edgardo J. Angara's conscientious work in the Philippine Senate has benefited various sectors all over the country.

In his three terms as Senator of the Republic, since 1987, he has been a cut above the rest as an outstanding legislator.

Significant bills he authored have been passed into law and improved the lives of countless Filipinos, especially in the fields of Education, Health, Agriculture, Business and Finance, Culture, Environment, and Science and Technology.

Senior Citizens, Muslims and Cultural Communities also have reason to be grateful for Ed Angara's selfless brand of public service.



CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT REFORMS
initiated and developed by Sen. Edgardo J. Angara

- Creation of the Commission on the Filipino Language (RA 7104)
- Providing for the promotion, development and preservation of National Living Treasures (RA 7355)
- Creation of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts or NCCA (RA 7356)
- Book Publishing Industry Development Act (RA 8047)
- Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) (RA 8371)
- National Museum System Act (RA 8492)
- Designating the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company as the Philippine National Folk Dance Company (RA 8626)
- Observance of Eidul Fitr as a National Holiday (RA 9177)
- Designation of Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day on June 30 every year (RA 9187)

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Mike A drops all libel cases vs journalists

From page A1

high-risk open heart surgery to repair a tear in his aorta.

Arroyo, a magnet for controversy in his wife's administration, had filed at least 17 libel cases against 46 journalists, including from the INQUIRER, over reports linking him to corruption, smuggling and other scandals. During one courtroom appearance, Arroyo challenged one lawyer to a fistfight.

"I am determined to keep in touch with the God that has been magnanimous to me, and let His spirit of generosity steer me through any future conflicts," the 60-year-old Arroyo said.

A GESTURE OF PEACE from Mike Arroyo after going through a most humbling experience. He left the hospital on May 1, and is now recuperating at the Palace.
INQUIRER PHOTO

Not so fast

Some of the accused journalists, however, called on Arroyo to continue what he had started and proceed with the libel cases.

"We want a court ruling, not something that is out of his mercy, not something because he is feeling magnanimous," said Marites Vitug, editor of Newsbreak magazine.

Jake Macasaet, Malaya editor, declared: "I will not owe my freedom to him."

Rowena Paraan, secretary general of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, doubted the sincerity of Arroyo, whose announcement coincided with World Press Freedom Day.

"It's a perfect way out for him, given all the bad press that the libel cases have generated," Paraan said. "Sincerity? We'll see that in their next move."

While welcoming Arroyo's move, Philippine Daily Inquirer publisher Isagani Yambot said, "We were ready to fight the cases in court."

Arroyo's statement was issued two days after he was discharged from St. Luke's Medical Center, where he underwent a critical aneurysmectomy and triple heart bypass on April 9.

Humbled

The statement showed a humbled Arroyo who had been combative before he was taken ill and diagnosed with a dissecting aortic aneurysm, a condition with a very high mortality rate and from which doctors said only 5 percent are able to completely recover.

His doctors, including his main attending physician Dr. Juliet Gopez-Cervantes and heart surgeon Dr. Rommel Cariño, had advised him to avoid all "stressful activities," including his libel cases, to prevent his blood pressure from shooting up and putting him anew at risk of suffering an aneurysm.

Arroyo apparently heeded his doctors' advice.

"The overwhelming kindness of those who have kept vigil with me over this process, and the compassion of even some of my harshest critics has truly been a humbling experience for me," Arroyo said.

"Both in sincere gratitude to a nation that deserves a more harmonious leadership, and as a gesture of peace to the many kind hearts who helped my family weather this crisis, I have instructed my attorneys to withdraw all the libel suits pending before the courts," he said.

"Seeking redress for all the grievances that the libel suits sought to address now pales in comparison to taking on a genuine chance to make peace and to pursue a more positive and constructive relationship with those who will accept my offer of a handshake."

He can now relax

"As a friend, I am happy for him. He can now relax," Arroyo's lawyer Ruy Rondain said when contacted by phone in San Francisco, California.

Rondain said the case against opposition Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, who is running for a Senate seat, was over because Cayetano had been suspended.

Arroyo thanked the people who stood by his family during what he said was a "dreadful ordeal I would not wish on anyone."

"Fr. Fernando Suarez said there are times when God performs miracles to remind people that He is there. I am very grateful to the Almighty that, with the very low survival rate of such a high-risk surgery, even the doctors believe that my recovery is nothing short of a miracle," he said.

Constant light

Arroyo paid tribute to the President, who held office in the presidential suite at St. Luke's during his hospitalization and cut short a visit to China.

"To my loving wife, the constant light in my life, who steadied me, and who has been by my side throughout this ordeal—a lesser person would not have been able to take care of me and still take on the duties of a President."

He said his children and grandchildren never failed to "lift my spirits when I needed it most" and gave him a reason to want to survive the life-threatening ordeal.

World-class care

Arroyo mentioned all his doctors at St. Luke's "for the world-class care and teamwork you brought to bear to save my life."

They were his attending physician Cervantes, Cariño who performed the 10-hour twin operations, Antonio Sibulo Jr., Jonnel Lim, Ruth Divinagracia, Oscar Naidas, Romeo Saavedra, his anesthesiologist Dahlia Estrera, Nancy Borja-Chio, Michael Villa, Myra Dolor-Torres, Dennis Natino, Ma. Paz Mildred Luque, Angelito Tingcungco, Adrian Peña, Abdias Aquino, Manuel Mariano, Nick Cruz, Francisco Dalangin, Noel Naval, Vanessa Lim, Benjamin Campomanes, SLMC vice president for customer affairs Marilen Lagniton and SLMC president Jose Ledesma.

"To the fellows, nurses and staff at St. Luke's who are truly capable of performing miracles—we should be proud our Filipino health care professionals are the finest in the world," he said.

Arroyo also thanked his relative and personal cardiologist Dr. Gary Lopez and US-based heart surgeon Dr. Alex Yap who flew in to monitor his condition at the SLMC.

He said the two doctors worked with the SLMC team "particularly in critical post-operative care to make sure that what was gained during the surgery would not be lost in the critical post-operative period."

Arroyo also thanked the Malacañang doctors and the bishops and priests who offered Masses for him.

He also thanked the doctors and staff at St. Louis Hospital in Baguio City "for taking care of me on the first day of my ordeal."

The St. Louis Hospital, where Arroyo was taken after falling ill on Black Saturday, diagnosed him as having only a case of "chronic gastritis." Cervantes, who diagnosed him later as having a dissecting aortic aneurysm, said Arroyo could have died because the aneurysm was about to rupture when he arrived at St. Luke's.

Never personal

Cayetano accepted Arroyo's "gesture of peace."

"I want the First Family to know that it was never personal. It was in the spirit of consistency of asking for accountability and transparency in government which we will continue to fight for," said Cayetano, who was charged with libel in connection with his claims that the First Family had stashed millions of dollars in a German bank.

Cayetano even called for a "ceasefire" on attacks against Arroyo "until he has recovered and wishes to address any of the issues raised by the opposition." *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac, AP, AFP*

1 killed in QC hotel blaze

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AN OFFICIAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE Interior and Local Government (DILG) was killed while some 30 people were injured when a fire hit a 19-story hotel in Quezon City last night.

The fatality was identified as Rodolfo Villoria, a provincial director of the DILG assigned in Ilocos Sur, who died on arrival at the Philippine Orthopedic Center. He reportedly jumped from the eighth floor of the Great Eastern Hotel at 1403 Quezon Avenue in Barangay West Triangle after the fire broke out at 7:49 p.m.

Ten of the injured were rushed to the Capitol Medical Center, two of them in serious condition, after they also jumped from the upper floors of the hotel. Some 20 others, mostly construction workers at the 17th to 19th floors, sustained minor injuries.

Fire officials feared many more people were trapped in the building, particularly in the upper floors.

The Great Eastern Hotel, formerly Aberdeen Court, is a commercial and residential building with an adjoining eight-story annex. It is owned by Richard Ng.

FO2 Millicent Cumon of the Bureau of Fire Protection Intelligence and Investigation Unit (BFP-IIU) said it appeared the fire started in the west wing of the 7th floor where the stockroom containing toiletry supplies was located.

Smoke quickly filled the entire floor as well as the upper floors, which caused several people to panic and attempt to save themselves by leaping out the windows. Other people ran toward the elevators and were able get down to the second floor before the electricity went out.

Others ran up to the rooftop above the 19th floor and waited for firefighters to rescue them as the fire quickly reached Task Force Charlie alarm.

A hotel staffer told dzBB radio that the annex building was unaffected except for thick smoke.

"You can't see anything anymore, it's all smoke there," one unidentified worker who emerged from the taller building told the radio station. He said he and about 30 others put wet cloth over their faces so they could escape.

Live television news coverage showed people waving from room windows and from the roof of the blazing building.

Rescuers were seen escorting guests one by one from the upper floors. One elderly woman who emerged from the building shaking was placed on a stretcher and taken to a nearby hospital, dzBB reported. A pregnant woman was also seen being escorted out.

It was not immediately clear how many floors were on fire.

With an AP report

Abra private army busted

By Alcuin Papa

A SHOOTING INCIDENT IN PENNARUBIA, Abra led to what is believed to be the first busting of a private army during the current election period in a province with a long history of electoral violence.

Policemen were responding to a report of a shooting in the Barangay Lusuac in Pennarubia when they stumbled on an arms cache in the house of Pennarubia Mayor Antonio Domes-ag.

Domes-ag was unable to present the necessary documents for the six firearms and ammunition that were uncovered.

He was immediately taken into police custody but was brought to the Abra Provincial Hospital after suffering from high blood pressure.

Charges of violations of the election gun ban and illegal possession of firearms are being prepared against Domes-ag.

In the report sent to Camp Crame, Task Force Abra said police had received a report that Wilfredo Pacano, a farmer, had been shot by suspect Ferdinand Fernandez for a still undetermined reason.

Responding policemen were about to move in and arrest the suspect when he ran into the farmhouse of Domes-ag.

Fernandez was cornered in one of the rooms by pursuing lawmen who discovered the arms cache on top of two beds.

Police confiscated an AK-47 assault rifle, two 12-gauge shotguns, one .22 rifle, one .38 revolver and various ammunition.

Policemen also arrested Fernandez who injured his knee while trying to escape. He has been charged with frustrated murder.

Director Wilfredo Garia, chief of the Philippine National Police directorate of operations, said Domes-ag had been on the PNP watch list because he was known to be maintaining a private army.

"He is listed as having a PAG in Abra. We can say now that the group has been neutralized because we have confiscated their firearms," Garcia said.

This is the first time an Abra politician suspected of harboring a partisan armed group (PAG) has been identified. *With Patricia Haban*

Tourists, trekkers told to stay off Taal

THE PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF VOLCANOLogy and Seismology yesterday cautioned the public, particularly tourists, against trekking up to the crater of the scenic Taal Volcano because of its above-normal eruptions.

"The public should not go inside because there might be steam explosions, and if they go to the crater rim, they have to be aware of the possibility of an explosion," Phivolcs director Renato Solidum Jr. said.

The people could venture into the island, but not inside the crater, he said.

Alert Level 1 has been in effect over the areas around the volcano in Tagaytay City since it started exhibiting seismic activities last year. This bars the public from venturing inside the 4-km permanent danger zone.

Phivolcs has recorded from two to 10 volcanic earthquakes in the volcano every day.

Apart from Taal volcano, Mayon Volcano in Legazpi and Mt. Bulusan in Sorsogon are being closely monitored by Phivolcs because of their abnormal behavior.

July Sabit, Phivolcs supervising science research specialist, said that if Taal Volcano explodes, it would be difficult for anybody who had ventured inside the crater to get out.

"If you go inside the crater, and there's a sudden increase in the volcano's activity, it will be difficult to get out considering that the trail going down and up is rough," he said in an interview.

Edgardo Villacorte, Phivolcs science research specialist, for his part, said that the advisory was both for the tourists and those living around the volcano. *With Angela Rebueno*

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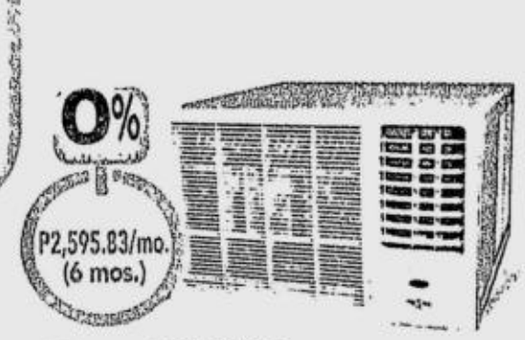

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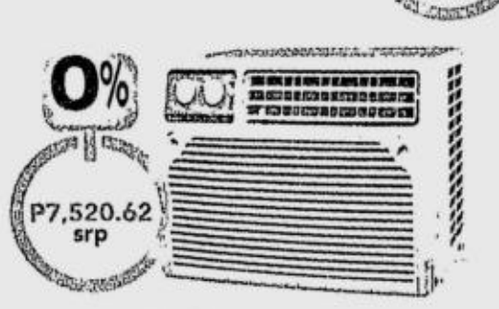

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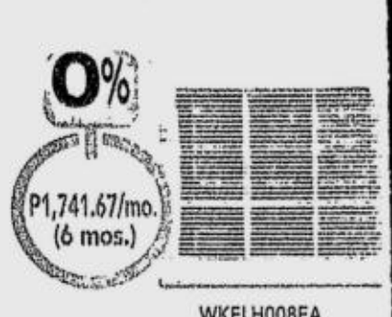

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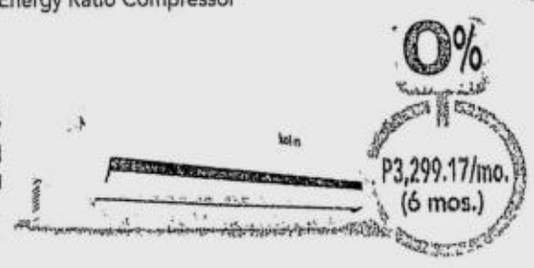

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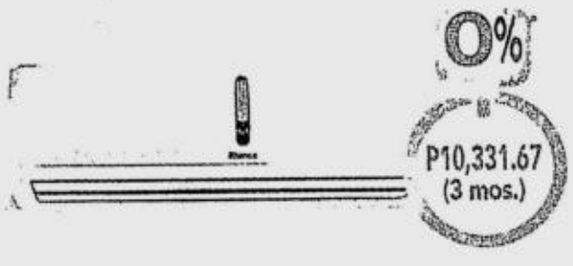

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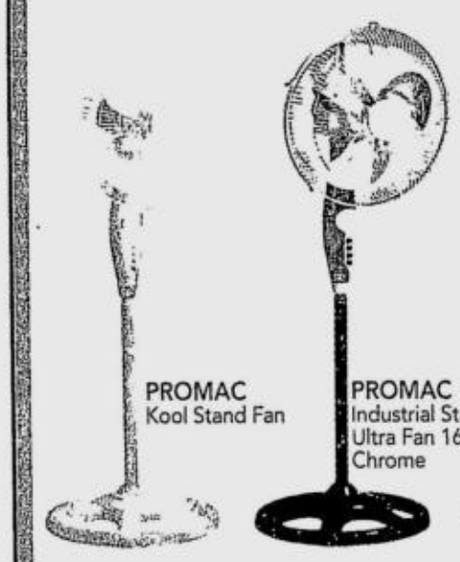

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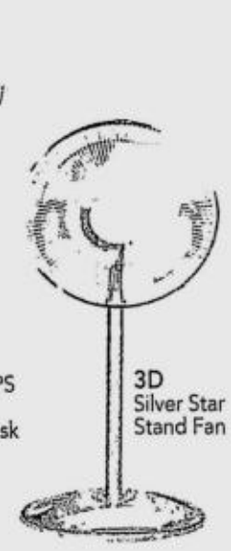

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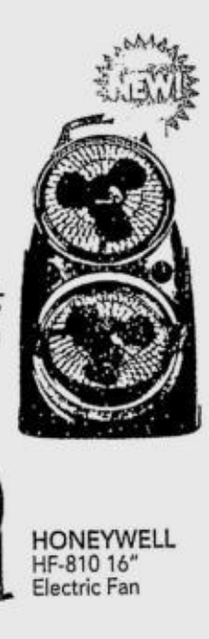

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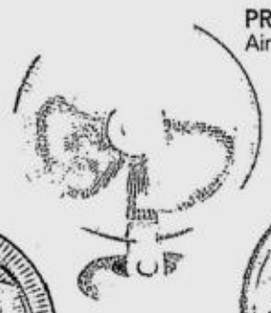

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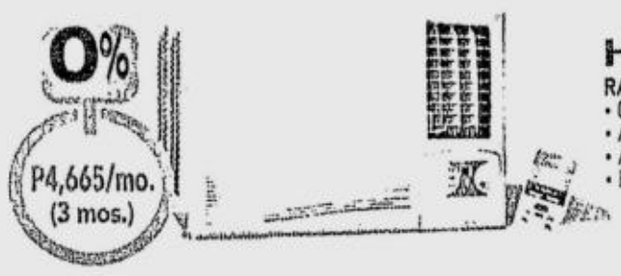

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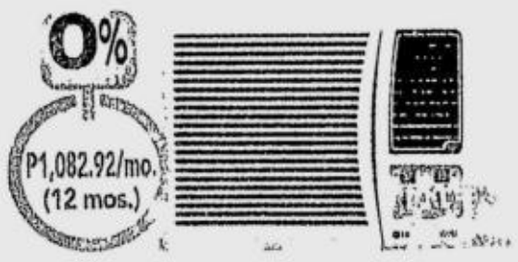

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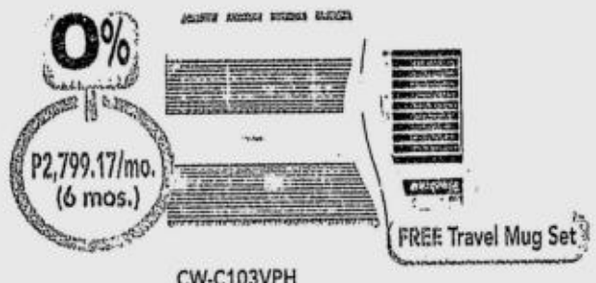

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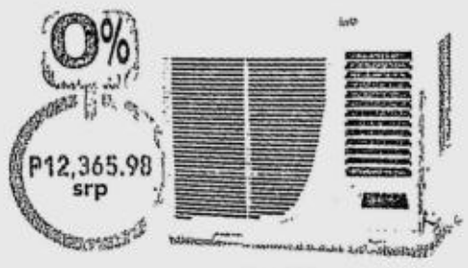

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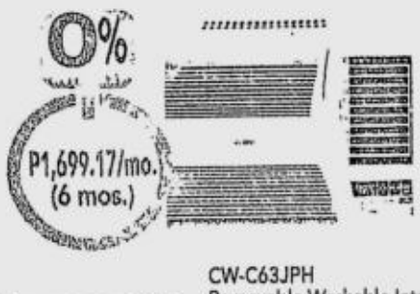

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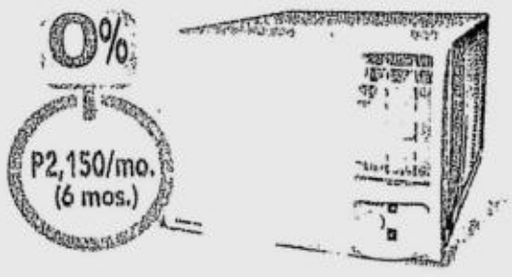

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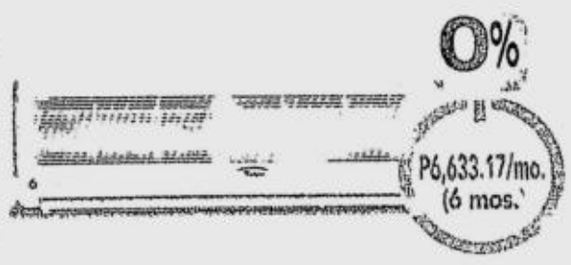

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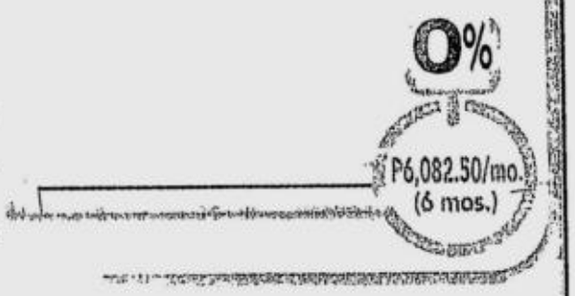

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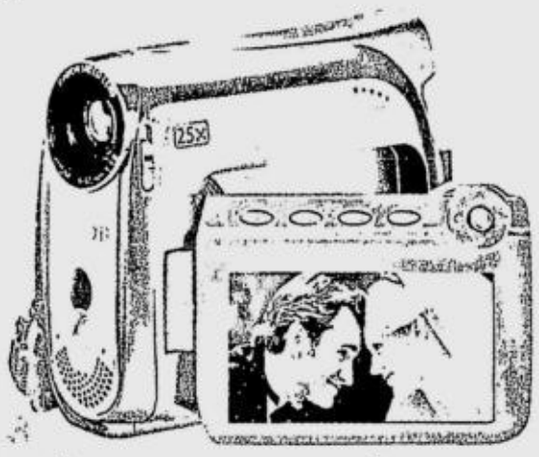

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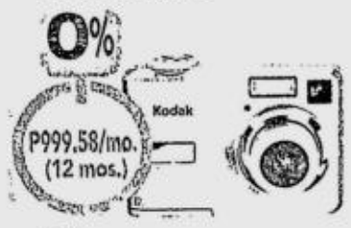

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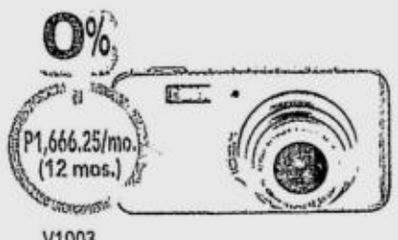

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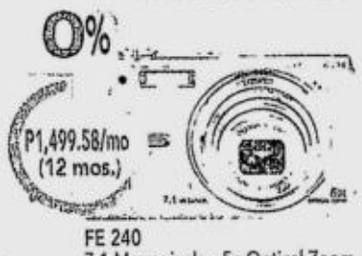

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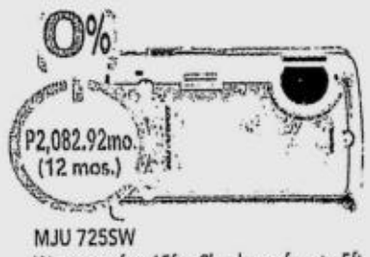

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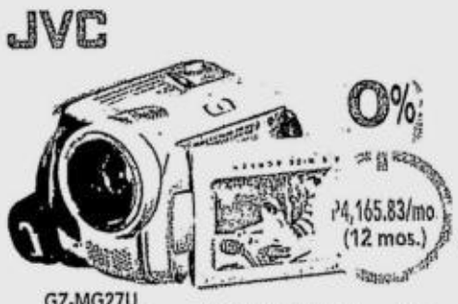

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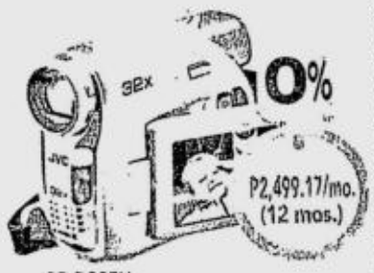

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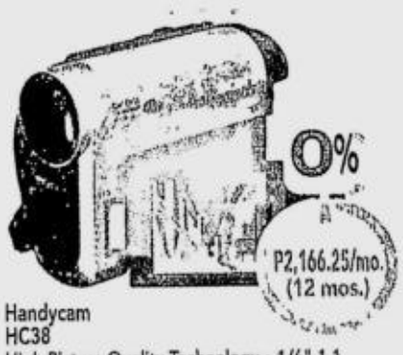

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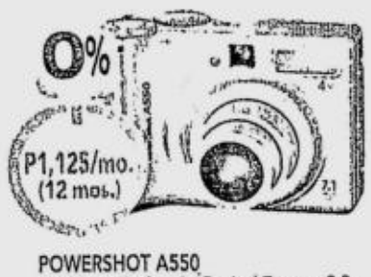

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Karma

IN THE PLAY "A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS," WILLIAM Roper, the son-in-law of Thomas More, expressed impatience with the law. Thomas More heatedly replied, "Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned 'round on you, where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? This country is planted thick with laws, from coast to coast, Man's laws, not God's! And if you cut them down, and you're just the man to do it, do you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake!"

EDITORIAL

The playwright who penned these lines served up an indictment of the culture of impunity: and yet one doesn't need to have watched the play or seen the film, or even know who St. Thomas More was. We use, and understand, the principles the playwright was trying to express in a common, everyday word: karma. What goes around, comes around—that's the cliché. But like any cliché, it has become a used and abused term because it expresses something we consider a basic truth.

What we pointed out yesterday bears repeating: the police may claim that there have been fewer killings during this election season than in the previous ones, but there is a qualitative difference that can't be ignored. In the past, it was the goons of politicians butchering each other and the lower-ranking political operatives of their enemies (not to mention the public). Today, it's quite obviously open season on the politicians themselves—and no one, except perhaps for their families, are weeping for them. The most recent rubouts—of Vicente Rabaya in Quezon City, Rommel Diasen in Tabuk, Kalinga, Julian Resuello in San Carlos City, Pangasinan and Roger Ilustrisimo in Cebu City involved candidates affiliated with the administration. The killings have infiltrated the heartland of the administration, Cebu, and yet they haven't provoked public outrage or sympathy the way the murders of Moises Padilla in the 1950s and Evelio Javier in the 1980s did. Precisely because these murders prove that political killings are not isolated cases, they are an increasingly high-profile epidemic; their victims are from the political camps that loudly support the administration and its mulish attitude toward political killings and disappearances—that it was the fault of the Left, that the victims could be ignored because they were critics of the administration, anyway, that the public could be held at bay if enough members of the Cabinet barked that everything was OK and anyone saying otherwise was an enemy of the state.

Kampi has not disowned Rep. Rodolfo Antonino, whose goons went berserk in Jaen, Nueva Ecija. President Macapagal-Arroyo has not disassociated herself from him, but how can she considering how steadfast he has been in supporting her? No officers in the AFP have been fired, or police brass, either.

Even Ferdinand Marcos knew well enough to respond to public opinion with the Agrava Commission, and at least he (temporarily) put Gen. Fabian Ver in the freezer. When former Senate President Jovito Salonga recently compared Hermogenes Esperon to Ver, the comparison he made was unfair—to Ver.

To be sure, cases have been filed, and cases will be filed, in the case of certain murders. But the end result is predictable: impunity on the part of Antonino, just as it has been impunity all the way for (now retired) Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and for Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. It is an impunity that's been worse than anything that has come before. It could even be said that in its human rights abuses, the Marcos regime was more discriminating, more careful, less careless about conducting its dirty work in the light of day and in full view of the public—until, with the Climaco, Aquino and Javier assassinations it, too, believed that it could get away with such acts with impunity, and fell from power.

Marcos, at least, when he ordered Jose Burgos' arrest, had his minions present a warrant. In our supposedly more democratic present, Burgos' son was abducted in public and his mother is reduced to asking people to pray he reappears in a week, otherwise the grim countdown from martial law days will presumably kick in and he will remain unseen for a long, long time, perhaps forever.

Marcos, at least, recognized some rules. Today, the rules don't matter at all. So, if those close to power are now dying, is it any wonder that the country considers it par for the course?

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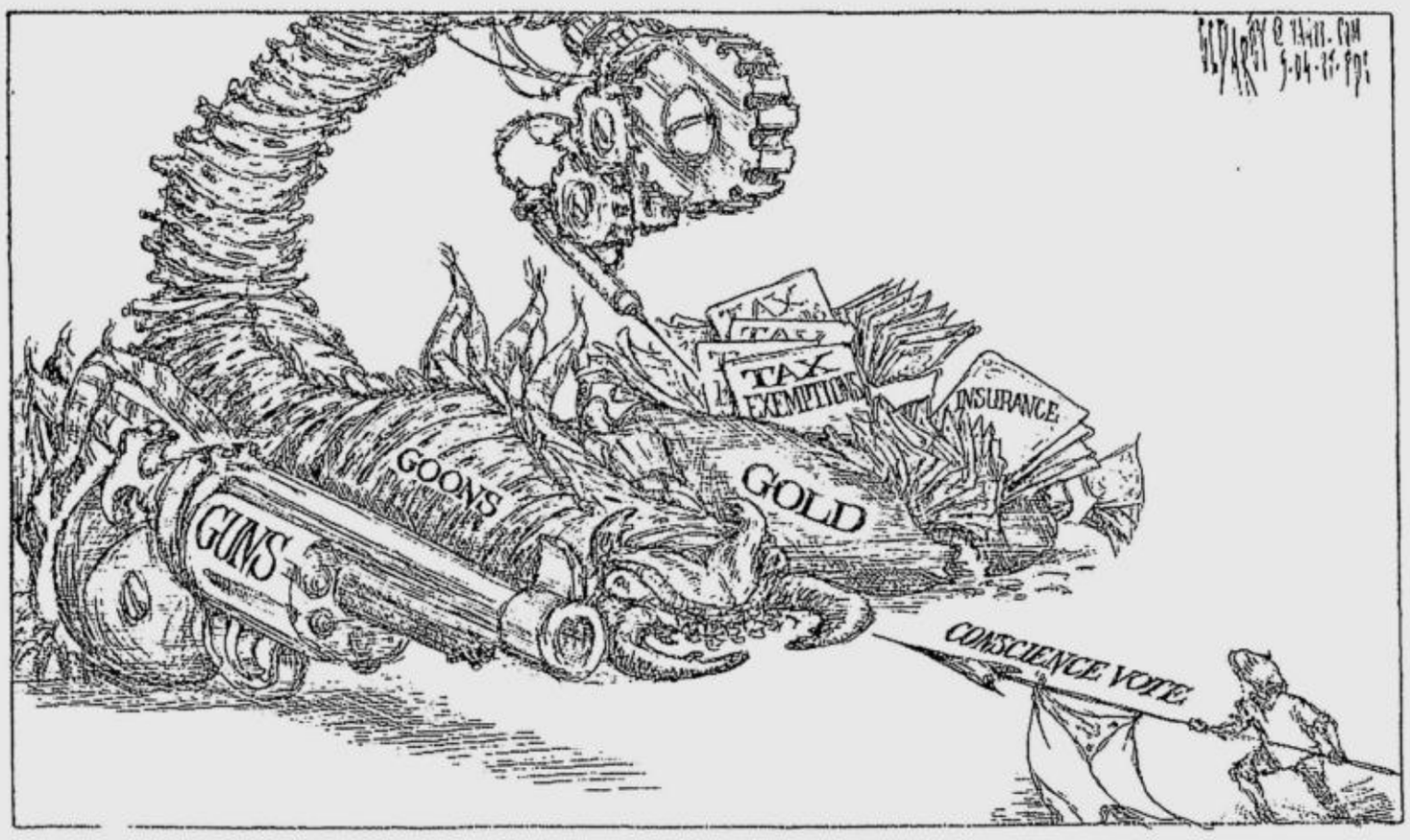


The case of the missing Manansala mural

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THERE ARE ONLY 10 DAYS TO GO BEFORE the national election, but believe it or not, the election of the National Press Club, held last February, is not yet over. There is a group serving as officers of the club, but the rival Reform Party led by Alice H. Reyes claims they are "fake officers" because they were not legally elected. It was the candidates of the Reform Party who were elected, it said in a newspaper it published last month. Shades of the national government.

But didn't a Manila regional trial court judge order new elections and declare the other group, led by Roy Mabasa, as the winners? That order was unlawful, said the Reyes group and it asked the Court of Appeals to nullify it. The lawful NPC officers are the candidates of the Reform Party, it said.

Until the Court of Appeals rules on the petition, NPC members will not know who are their rightful officers. Not that any group is better than the other. Confusing, isn't it? We will explain this later.

But before things get any better they are going to get worse for the members of the Mabasa group. They are facing lawsuits to be filed by the Government Service Insurance System for selling the mural of National Artist Vicente Manansala that had formed part of the wall of the NPC dining hall. The GSIS is claiming ownership of the mural (as well as the whole NPC property) and asked the Mabasa board to return the mural to it "or criminal and civil charges would be filed" against it.

In his reply, Mabasa said the mural "rightfully belonged to (his?) association," and that "we have sufficient legal basis to sustain our position that said the mural was not part of the property mortgaged to and foreclosed by the GSIS."

I am privy to the origins of the mural and the NPC lot and building. The lot beside the Pasig River was donated to the NPC by the government during the term of President Ramon Magsaysay. The NPC mortgaged it to the GSIS as collateral for the loan used to construct the building.

While the building was being constructed, I.P. Soliongco, columnist of the Manila Chronicle, convinced his friend Vicente Manansala to paint a mural depicting the Philippine press on the wall of the dining hall. Manansala painted it on the lawanit boards of the wall itself. Later, a portrait of Manansala was hung beside it. Thus, the mural was part of the building and not a separate painting like the Manansala portrait.

That mural was almost burned twice. A fire engulfed the kitchen of the NPC and threatened to engulf the mural, too. The fire was put out in time but soot from the smoke blackened the mural.

When I became president of the NPC, I had the mural cleaned by experts from the National Museum. Some of the soot was removed but much of it still remained.

I asked Manansala to look at it. The artist decided to retouch the whole mural. He was helped by National Artist Ang Kiukok, Malang, Paeng Salas, Cris Cruz, Gig de Pio and others. Thus, Manansala painted the mural not only once but twice.

After I left the NPC presidency, there was another fire and the mural was again damaged by soot. By then Manansala was dead. Another unsuccessful attempt was made to clean it.

And there it stayed until that controversial election last February. Were some opportunists already eyeing the valuable mural at that time? Was that the reason the fight for control of the NPC building was so fierce?

Anyway, as soon as the Mabasa board took over (illegally, according to the Reyes group), it quietly sold the mural for P10 million during the Christmas holidays when the members were very busy. There was no announcement, no hint given at all to the general membership. The sale of the mural was made surreptitiously.

The Mabasa board claims the sale was approved by a "general assembly vote" during the NPC anniversary on Oct. 27, 2006 and later by a resolution of the present board. Was there ever such a vote? I and many other NPC members were not aware of it. Almost all the members were not given any notice of such meeting. Even if there was such a meeting, there could not have been any quorum. "In the 53-year history of the NPC, there has never been a general meeting with a quorum, and we doubt the Oct. 27 'meeting' had one, so how can it have 'ratified' the sale of the mural?" the Reyes group asked. "Where is the list of NPC members who attended and their signatures attesting to their attendance? Where are the official minutes of the meeting?" And where is the resolution approving the sale by the NPC board?

"Where are the documents for the sale: the deed of sale, the invoices, official receipts, etc.?" the Reyes group asks. And where is the P10 million? In what bank was it deposited? Is it still intact?

And where is the mural itself? Reports say it was sold to Heritage Arts and Antiques, owned by Mario and Odette Alcantara, but there are reports that they were only the brokers. So who is the real buyer? Heritage and the NPC are not saying. Why the secrecy?

A board member said "the NPC board unanimously decided to clear all legal obstacles, including the ownership issues and cross-claims by parties." Cleared? How come the GSIS is threatening lawsuits?

The GSIS says the mural belongs to it and neither the NPC board nor the alleged NPC "general meeting" has the right to sell it. And that if it is not returned to the GSIS pronto, "all the responsible officers and members of the board (the Mabasa group)" would be in deep trouble.

Why does the GSIS own the mural? More on this in the next column.

Laissez-faire desaparecidos

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

SORRY FOR MIXING LANGUAGES THERE, but just when Malacañang denied former Sen. Jovito R. Salonga's foreboding of a rerun of Marcos-era militarization, we read that another activist has "disappeared" martial-law style.

We join the family of Jayjay Burgos, especially his mother, his wife and child, in praying that he will soon reappear hale and healthy. Their anxiety must be torture for the soul. I join all the other concerned Filipinos in pressuring the government to act swiftly and effectively to find him.

The abduction and disappearance of Jayjay Burgos fit the familiar pattern of the desaparecido. It should give us pause that "extrajudicial" acts of coercion do persist, the Alston and the Melo reports notwithstanding, global concern from the United Nations and the European Community and also the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee aside.

But what should make Jayjay's abduction even more alarming is that, this time, the abductors were brazen enough to take him in a shopping mall, right in the heart of the city and at the height of a weekend.

That four heavily built plainclothesmen would accost Jayjay coercively in a restaurant and "sandwich" him forcibly amongst them, alarmingly enough for a security guard to insinuate himself into the conversation, only to be shooed away—that certainly destroys the veneer of normalcy, and negates Malacañang's image of a fully functioning democracy under a regime of law.

That Jayjay would be accompanied by these burly men into a waiting van—that certainly fits the stock profile of desaparecidos since the 1970s and for the next three decades.

But that Jayjay would be taken while having lunch at the Ever Gotesco Mall along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, at around 1 p.m. during a summer weekend—that bespeaks a gumption that I associate mainly with fascist arrogance: to have the nerve to abduct a human being and expect the rest of the world to take it sitting down.

I have read reports that Jayjay shouted to bystanders that he was an *aktibista*. If that is true, it was a smart move because, as primers for my generation of student protesters had long taught, the first response against "*dukut*" is to let others remember you. Thus, the standard advice: shout, make a scene, leave behind any personal object, a hankie, a shoe, *tsinelas*, whatever—leave a sign that once upon a time, you were there. The worst fate is not to be disappeared, but to be forgotten.

I have many times in the past written in this space about desaparecidos, and why repressive governments prefer to "disappear" critics because it spares them from having to deal with such cumbersome annoyances as a "warrant of arrest" or "due process of law." The sole witness is merely silenced forever.

The Commission on Human Rights has summoned the intelligence chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to a hearing. That CHR initiative is welcome. We can expect the AFP to deny having Jayjay in its custody, the standard "Who, me?" defense of states when accused of human rights violations. That way, a habeas corpus petition is all for naught, and that great writ of liberty enshrined in the Bill of Rights, literally translated, "produce the body," becomes a most unfortunate remedy. Defied, the petition is useless; followed literally, it is sadly macabre.

I trust that the CHR won't take the "Who, me?" defense hook, line and sinker. Assuming that indeed the government is not complicit at all in Jayjay's abduction, under international law, it remains responsible unless it had taken every measure to avert such incidents, following the warnings from the Alston and the Melo reports, and that post hoc they have prosecuted the guilty.

Amnesty International has warned that the government's "all-out war" on communism might be interpreted as a tacit signal that political killings are a legitimate part of the anti-insurgency campaign. The "continuing paucity of prosecutions and convictions" will "entrench a de facto climate of impunity that emboldened security personnel to commit further violations."

Jayjay belongs to Alyansa ng Magbubukid, a chapter of militant peasant organization Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), which is on the watch list of the military. The really sad part was that Jayjay's "activism," since he was a trained agriculturist, was to promote organic farming. It is sad that such a practical, commonsense cause would be seen as subversive.

Prof. Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, has stated emphatically that "based on [his] fact-finding, there is no reasonable doubt that the military is responsible for a significant number of the killings. Subsequent evidence points to the continuing nature of that practice."

But the most worrisome was what Alston called "a passivity, bordering on an abdication of responsibility" by key government officials washing their hands. The congressional chair for human rights said he had no help to give because no new legislation was entailed. The prosecutors said it was not for them to gather evidence—that was the job of the police. Justice officials said they couldn't interfere with the prosecutors, because that would impair prosecutorial independence. The Ombudsman acknowledged that it "received 44 complaints from 2002 to 2006 on extrajudicial executions attributed to state agents [yet it] concluded that it was unable to act on even a single case."

If we adopt a laissez faire attitude to political killings, we will end up asking the economics professor in Malacañang: So whose is the Invisible Hand?

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

The Royal offensive

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

SOCIALIST SEGOLENE ROYAL ON WEDNESDAY mounted an audacious offensive to gain the upper hand in the French run-off presidential election on Sunday, with a blazing attack on France's Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, the Center-Right candidate for president, on a number of issues, ranging from the economy, law and order and social security to France's destiny and foreign policy.

The attack surprised more than 20 million French citizens who watched the candidates' first live head-to-head TV debate—more than the spectators at a World Cup match—and ignited polemical fireworks that turned the debate into a highly charged emotional encounter highlighting the historic ideological polarization between Left and Right of French society and the sharply contrasting political styles of Royal and Sarkozy.

The London Times described the TV debate as a "duel between Dracula and Mary Poppins," caricaturing the images of Sarkozy as a heartless and tough law-and-order person and Royal as a socially caring politician in a welfare state, with a Joan of Arc complex. The Times said this was a battle between "*a la belle* (sleeping beauty) *et le bête* (the beast)."

The debate comes at a decisive stage of the French election, in which the Socialists are making a strong bid to return to power after the retirement of President Jacques Chirac, whose Center-Right government had run the country for 12 years.

The May 6 election climaxes the first-round elimination poll on April 22, which propelled Sarkozy and Royal to the run-off. In the first round, Sarkozy won 29-30 percent and Royal 25-26 percent of the vote, the two highest number of votes, in a result that left French voters with a clear choice between Left (the Socialists) and Center-Right (Sarkozy's neo-Gaullist Union of Popular Movement). Eliminated were the centrist Francois Bayrou (with 18 percent of the vote) and Jean-Marie Le Pen of the extreme right National Front, who polled 11 percent.

The first round drew a record turnout of voters—85 percent, the highest since 1965. The turnout reflected the intense interest of the voters in the stakes involved in the election.

The election is being held in a France churned by a strong ferment of change. For the first time since World War II, two politicians are running for president who were born after the war, representing a general change in leadership recruitment, a woman has become a serious contender for the presidency, and an immigrant (Sarkozy is the son of a Hungarian immigrant) is running for president.

The election is set against the background of a deeply troubled France, suffering decades of high unemployment, increasing competition from more dynamic economies in the European Union and China, and the sense that France is losing influence in the world. Royal and Sarkozy are vying for votes that went to the centrist Bayrou, which have now become pivotal.

The themes and tactics of Royal and Sarkozy are addressed to this Center. They have defined the themes of their campaigns. Both seek to regenerate France, and have presented themselves as agents of change, but they have different visions of a revitalized France and of its destiny. The voters will choose who will do the change and under whose program.

After the first round, Royal said, "A new campaign has opened. In two weeks, France will choose its destiny and its face. On May 6, we will have a clear choice between two very different paths."

She told a rally she wanted to lead "the fight for change, so that France can get optimism back." She said she wanted to "change France without brutalizing it." She was referring to Sarkozy's tough measures in quelling the 2005 riots in Paris' depressed migrant districts and to his economic policies that seek to reduce social welfare benefits and reform the 35-hour work week, a Socialist legacy.

In an effort to soften his tough image, Sarkozy has said, "I want to tell all the French who are scared of the future and who feel fragile, vulnerable, who find life harder and harder, I want to tell them that I want to protect them."

He said he wanted to rally the people of France to "a new French dream, a dream in which everyone will find their place, where no one will be afraid of the other, and where diversity will be experienced not as a threat but as a richness."

The debate centered among others on the sluggish economy, the 35-hour work week, high unemployment and Sarkozy's plan to cut taxes as an incentive to business. He called the 35-hour work week a "disaster for France."

The Socialists have attacked Sarkozy's program as an attempt to dismantle the generous cradle-to-grave Socialist model of social security.

In the debate, Royal emphasized the theme, "Anybody but Sarkozy." She played on fears about his character and his wish to make the French work longer and harder. She appealed to all men and women who "want a republic of respect to triumph in France—because we know there is no freedom without justice, no economic efficiency without social progress."

The aggressive tone of Royal in the debate sought to put Sarkozy on the defensive and to provoke him into losing his temper as well as to demonstrate that she had the strength to lead the renewal of France. It lifted morale among the Socialists who said the offensive had transformed her previously lackluster campaign. It rallied the troops from the core constituency of the Left who had misgivings that in her effort to adapt the Socialist model to calls for revitalizing the sluggish economy, she might be abandoning their vision of France's social identity and destiny.

'Que sera, sera'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I'M SURE MANY OF YOU KNOW THE SONG. HEAR THE music now? Let's begin: "When I was just a little girl (*OK, so if you're a guy then change the lyrics*)/ I asked my mother / What will I be?/ Will I be pretty?/ Will I be rich?/ Here's what she said to me."

Do I hear you humming now? "Que sera, sera./ Whatever will be, will be./ The future's not ours to see./ Que sera, sera./ What will be, will be."

Legend has it that when Doris Day first heard the song, her reaction was that it was a "forgettable children's song." Eventually, she recorded the song for Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, "The Man Who Knew Too Much." The song won an Oscar for best original song.

My parents tell me I loved the song when I was a child, oblivious, of course, of the lyrics and content to repeat "que sera, sera." Children love the song because it is catchy, while adults, well, it is a sticky tune—you hear the first two lines and you hum along, and again, and again, but it isn't irritating like many other glue-y songs.

Hebrew, English and Tagalog

The other day "Que sera, sera" returned to haunt me when I got a DVD film, which opened and ended with the song. It was a film entitled "Paper Dolls" and the cover showed what looked like a showgirl, all decked out in costume ready to dance. No, it wasn't some adaptation of "Dream Girls"; rather unexpectedly, it was a documentary about Filipinos in Tel Aviv, made by an Israeli, Tomer Heymann. The back cover said the film ran 80 minutes, in color, widescreen, in Hebrew, English and Tagalog with English subtitles.

I don't remember reading about the film here in the Philippines, but I may have just missed it. On the other hand, I would have thought that if the film had made it here, it would have attracted more attention in the media, including rave reviews.

The film is about a group of Filipino *bakla*, living and working in Tel Aviv as caregivers. Yes, it is a true story, with Heymann following them around as they care for their wards, all elderly men, and making the oddest of couples (imagine them walking around in semi-drag, dressed like women as the *bakla* are over here, while wheeling around their elderly wards in the B'nei Brak district of Tel Aviv, an Orthodox Jewish section with very conservative residents).

We learn that these Filipinos were undocumented, meaning illegal, workers, but then after the second Palestinian Intifada (uprising), the Israeli government found themselves lacking laborers, and relaxed their immigration rules. The Filipino *bakla* were able to get jobs as caregivers, and by Israeli laws, could stay for as long as their employers would vouch for them.

The main characters in this real-world drama are Cheska (originally Francisco), Sally (Salvador), Jan (Troan Jacob), Giorgi (Eduardo) and Chiqui. All are in their 30s. All have lived in the Middle East for several years.

As their stories unfold, we are reminded that there are Filipinos who go overseas not just for economic reasons but also because they're sexual refugees, people unable to find acceptance from their own families back home. They venture overseas, hoping to find a new life, sometimes even risking it by going to places that may seem even more inhospitable.

In Israel, this motley band of adventurers end up as caregivers by day, but occasionally launch night performances as female impersonators or drag queens. The caregivers are, to put it politely, on the matronly side, so their shows border on parody. Heymann introduces them to a nightclub owner, and for their audition number, they perform the Hebrew folk song "Hava Nagila," yes, another sticky song that means "Let us rejoice." But the nightclub owner wants them to pretend to be Japanese geisha. They quit.

The drag shows become almost incidental. What we see are the bonds the caregivers build with their elderly patients. We are reminded of the difficulties of caregiving, with one of the Paper Dolls describing how her ward, who has Alzheimer's, was constantly wandering off. What makes their work even more valiant is the way they adjust to cultures so different from our own, sometimes almost outrageously. There is one scene that left me partly in shock: an orthodox Jewish old man devoutly praying, apparently oblivious to the Filipino caregiver at his side, headphones on, singing away a bit too loudly—inside a synagogue.

Throughout the film, we hear the *bading* speaking in Hebrew. I have no way of telling how good they are at it, but they seem to be comfortable and articulate.

Sally is something else. She is the most endearing among the Paper Dolls. Caring for Haim, an elderly man with throat cancer who has lost his voice, Sally has learned to read Hebrew so she can figure out Haim's written instructions. Not only that, because Haim wanted her to learn more Hebrew, he had her reading aloud the poetry of Yehuda Amichai, which she does quite well.

The documentary reveals the difficult life of the Paper Dolls: cramped living quarters, fears of police raids, fears of terrorist bombs. There is one scene showing the chaotic aftermath of a bombing: The authorities call on everyone to seek medical help and not to worry about being arrested. The authorities know the area is full of illegal migrants, including the Filipinos.

One of the Paper Dolls talks, too, about missing her mother, bringing home the message that we export Filipinos to care for other nations' elderly, at the cost of being separated from their own elderly.

And yes, there is discrimination, even in cosmopolitan Tel-Aviv. We hear an Israeli taxi driver calling them perverse, even as he describes his own trip to the Philippines where he could pick up sex workers for a few dollars.

Half-Jewish, half-Filipino

The warm moments come, unexpectedly, from the elderly patients. Early on, Haim's kindness and good heart show. He says that he hired Sally as a man, but it's become inconsequential that she didn't quite prove to be as manly as he had expected.

I want you to watch the film to appreciate how Sally and the other Paper Doll, find their place. I don't want to give you the ending except to say that eventually, they go on to Britain, still caring for the elderly.

In a talk show interview, Heymann recalls, with amusement, how Chiqui was beginning to feel she had found her place, describing herself as "half-Jewish, half-Filipino," again oblivious to the realities of politics and citizenship in Israel, or of Jewishness.

And yet when you think about it, the Paper Dolls' situation is probably only more dramatic than that of most other Filipinos. Given our age of diaspora, what is the Philippines for us? What does being a Filipino mean?

The Paper Dolls become Filipino icons in the way we all are liminal—never home, never away from home. Maybe, too, "Que sera sera" is appropriate, almost an anthem for us. There's irony in the way we actually face so many choices now of where we can live, where we can work, and yet we make our choices, sighing, "Que sera sera."

Beating new paths

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I THOUGHT I'D TAKE A BREAK FROM WRITING about our Cebu trip and had resigned myself to writing a column on the coming elections. Why resigned? Mainly because I think I have said all there is to say about the May 14 polls, and also because developments in the campaign have so far only been disheartening. The killings and shootouts are distressing enough, the issues (or lack thereof) that have been raised are so silly and stultifying one wonders what has happened in the last few years that the quality of political debate should have deteriorated to such an extent.

Of course, for comic relief, there's always Manny Pacquiao who is turning out to be the joke of the season. "Do not give your life the chance to die" is only his latest bon mot, but already it promises to linger on as the enduring slogan of Elections '07.

But there isn't even any pleasure to be gained from poking fun at malapropisms and their creators. There are enough clowns running for public office in our midst and the unfunny thing about it is that they often go on to win and "serve" the public.

I thought I'd write something to inspire our young people, many of whom are choosing to sit out the elections, despairing of ever making a difference. This campaign season, more than at any other time, brings us back to the bad old pre-martial law days, when dirty tricks ruled and character assassination (if not actual assassination) was the method of choice to bring down a candidate.

Then again, I thought to myself: How could I write something inspiring when I feel anything but inspired these days? Whatever words flow out of my laptop keys will only sound hallow and contrived, for they do not come from the heart or even from a half-convinced brain.

* * *

THIS is why I choose instead to re-print the valedictory of Mikaela Irene Fudolig, the 16-year-old prodigy who graduated summa cum laude with a BS in Physics from the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

Her speech, which she titled "Take Not the Road Less Traveled," has been making the rounds of the Internet, and struck me because of its generally upbeat tone and optimistic take on the dilemmas confronting our young people, especially our newly minted graduates.

Tessy Ang See, whose son was a batchmate of Mikaela's and graduated with a BS in Chemistry, says that Mikaela, her son and eight other friends have all decided to stay on at UP and teach. I don't know if this decision is born out of naiveté or a sincere desire to carve a new, unexpected career path for themselves, who can only be expected to take advantage of their superior training and intellects.

But to know that these words are not only inspiring, but also backed by actual commitment, should convince young people out there that there is more to this speech than just motherhood statements or sentiments. The speech is too long for a single column, so I'm reprinting the conclusion tomorrow.

* * *

ONE of the things that strikes me as being very "UP Diliman" is the way UPD students can't seem to stay on the pavement. From every street corner that bounds an unpaved piece of land, one will espy a narrow trail that cuts the corner, or leads from it. Every lawn around the buildings sports at least one of these paths, starting from a point nearest to the IKOT stop and ending at the nearest entry to the building. The trails are beaten on the grass by many pairs of feet wanting to save a fraction of a meter of traveling, no matter that doing so will exact some cost to the shoes, or, to the ubiquitous slippers, especially when the trails are new.

What do these paths say about us, UP students?

One could say that the UP student is enamored of Mathematics and Pythagoras, hence these triangles formed by the pavement and the path. Many among you would disagree.

Others could say that the UP student is naturally countercultural. And the refusal to use the pavement is just one of the myriad of ways to show his defiance of the order of things. This time, many would agree.

Still, others will say that the UP student is the model of today's youth: they want everything easier, faster, now. The walkable paths appeal to them because they get to their destination faster, and presumably, with less effort. Now that is only partly true, and totally unfair.

* * *

THESE trails weren't always walkable. No doubt they started as patches of grass, perhaps overgrown. Those who first walked them must have soiled their shoes, stubbed their toes, or had insects biting their legs, all in the immovable belief that the nearest distance between two points is a straight line. They might even have seen snakes cross their paths. But the soiled footwear, sore toes, and itchy legs started to conquer the grass. Other people, seeing the yet faint trail, followed. And as more and more walked the path, the grass gave in and stopped growing altogether, making the path more and more visible, more and more walkable.

The persistence of the paths pays tribute to those UP students who walked them first, the pioneers of the unbeaten tracks: the defiant and curious few who refuse the familiar and comfortable; the out-of-the-box thinkers who solve problems instead of fretting about them; the brave who dare do things differently, and open new opportunities to those who follow.

They say how one behaved in the past would determine how he behaves in the future. And as we leave the university, temporarily or for good, let us call on the pioneering, defiant, and brave spirit that built the paths to guide us in this next phase of our life. *(To be concluded)*

The fight over the Rizal Law

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHILE WRITING THE CONCLUSION OF THIS two-part column, I caught a story on CNN regarding a new hurdle for prospective immigrants to the United States. Aside from an English proficiency test, they now have to pass an oral history test before they are granted US citizenship. Americans were not comfortable with the history pop quiz, considering this better suited for "Jeopardy" than the US Immigration and Naturalization Service. A review class was shown with the teacher reminding the students about the colors of the American flag. While most knew it was red, white and blue, someone added yellow into the mix. Knowledge of history, it was argued, made a better citizen.

We are ruled by many laws, yet we rarely read these if only to gain an appreciation of their spirit and intent. RA 1425, better known as the Rizal Law, was passed to teach Filipino students nationalism or love of country as expressed in the life and writings of Rizal. The preamble states that it is the duty of schools "to develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and to teach the duties of citizenship." On those general terms, there is nothing controversial except that one of the means to that end was to make Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo" required reading in schools. Considering the novels, in part, anti-Catholic, the Church could not accept these as "a constant and inspiring source of patriotism with which the minds of the youth, especially during their formative and decisive years in school, should be suffused," as the law states.

Going through the novels with a fine-tooth comb, specific passages were deemed offensive to the Catholic faith. Church spokesmen argued that Catholics could read selected passages from Rizal's work, but to compel Catholics to read Rizal's novels in its "unexpurgated" or uncensored version was to force heresy on them and violate their freedom of conscience. Catholic schools put up a good fight and even threatened to close if the Rizal bill was passed. Claro M. Recto calmly told them to go ahead so the state could then nationalize all the schools and teach what it wanted. The Church retreated but threatened to "punish" erring legislators in future elections. Recto was undaunted.

A compromise was suggested with a proposal to use "expurgated" versions of the novels as textbooks, with the "unexpurgated" copies to be kept under lock and key in the school libraries, to be used or made available only at the discretion and or approval of higher school officials. Recto pushed ahead. He did not want an adulterated reading of the novels, he did not want a watered-down bill and declared, "The people who would eliminate the books of Rizal from the schools would blot out from our minds the memory of the national hero. This is not a fight against Recto but a fight against Rizal. Now that Rizal is dead and they can no longer attempt at his life, they are attempting to blot out his memory."

Section 1 of RA 1425 states: "Courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novels, shall be included in the curricula of all schools, colleges and universities, public or private; Provided that in the collegiate courses, the original or unexpurgated editions or their English translations shall be used as basic texts."

It is clear from this that students are to read either the original Spanish or translations of these, and that they should be read whole and unedited, yet a compromise is also found in the law: "The Board of National Education is hereby authorized and directed to adopt forthwith measures to implement and carry out the provisions of this Section, including the writing and printing of appropriate primers, readers and textbooks. The Board shall promulgate rules and regulations, including those of a disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the regulations of this Act. The Board shall promulgate rules and regulations providing for the exemption of students, for reason of religious belief stated in a sworn written statement, from the requirement of the provision contained in the second part of the first paragraph of this section; but not from taking the course."

It is not well known that an exemption from the reading of the novels, based on religious belief, is available, but not exemption from the course. To date nobody has applied for this exemption. Besides, anyone who wants to avail himself of it won't know how to go about it.

The next two sections have to do with making the novels available. Section 2 directs schools to keep "an adequate" number of copies of the novels in their libraries. Do school libraries today have enough on the shelves to serve the entire school population? What is the intent of the law, to make copies available free for every student or merely keep enough for reference?

Section 3 adds that the Board of National Education should have the novels translated into the major Philippine languages, "cause them to be printed in cheap, popular editions; and cause them to be distributed, free of charge, to persons desiring to read them, through the Purok organizations and the Barrio Councils throughout the country."

Can we go to our barangays today and get copies of Rizal's novels for free? I doubt it. But returning to the law and knowing how it came to be help us appreciate the rationale for having Rizal taught in schools today.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Bets speak only for themselves

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS should put a stop to the spate of opinion polls showing voters' preferences for individual candidates. The minds of voters are being conditioned to vote for the front-runners in the surveys. Filipinos look upon elections as they would a horse race. They favor the perceived winner, *"Sayang ang boto ko sa matatalo, kaya doon ako sa mananalo."* Pity the candidates who are at the bottom-rung of the polls—they are at a disadvantage. The playing field should be even.

The coming elections also pose a dilemma for voters. Political parties have virtually disappeared and nobody talks about party platforms anymore. Both Team Unity and the Genuine Opposition are made up of candidates who do not share a common political platform. The candidates speak only for themselves and mouth motherhood statements and vague generalities, leaving voters clueless on what specific legislative measures they have in mind.

The candidates themselves may be in limbo as to their specific programs, if elected. This is bad for the country and is a far cry from the elections held decades ago. People often ask: "Where are the good people who should be running for office?"

The candidates may be goaded by the following considerations:

1. Running for the presidency in 2010. The Senate will serve as the springboard for higher office. There are three known presidential aspirants among the senatorial candidates. The first one has little to crow about by way of achievement in both Houses of Congress. The second one is weighed down by a heavy political baggage from questionable actuations in an earlier assignment. The third one is the most ambitious of the three, having taken advantage of many issues in the past to the point of crassness.

2. Reviving the impeachment move against the President before 2010.

3. Starting, maintaining or strengthening the political dynasty or giving way to a close kin who wants to run for the position the candidate is presently occupying.

4. Benefiting from the pork barrel allocation (P200 million for senators and P70 million for congressmen).

5. Rekindling the fires of Charter change, with the establishment of a unicameral parliamentary system over the present unified presidential setup; and, especially, extension of term limits.

What roils many voters is the temerity of recycled politicians who think that the public has forgotten their rejection in past elections because of poor and tainted performances in the legislature. Some descendants of illustrious political leaders feel that they can ride on the good name of their forebears. The absurd and inane catchwords, phrases and slogans in the campaign reflect on them.

—APOLONIO G. RAMOS,
42 Mindanao St., Marikina City

Asking for an apology from Gonzalez is futile

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR JUSTICE SECRETARY Raul Gonzalez to keep his mouth shut because he doesn't have any idea about sensitivity, civility, diplomacy, sympathy and empathy. He needs to listen to Vicky Morales' interview with Julia Campbell's sister, Geary. She was a class act Gonzalez won't recognize and understand even if it was explained to him.

That's the tragedy of this man. One can't demonstrate externally what one doesn't have internally. So to ask him to apologize is an exercise in futility. When confronted with the insensitivity of his comments about Julia's death, he replied: "What's wrong with what I said?" That says it all.

—SYLVIA MARTINEZ,
926 Duell St., Glendora, CA 91740, USA

GSIS ads help keep members informed

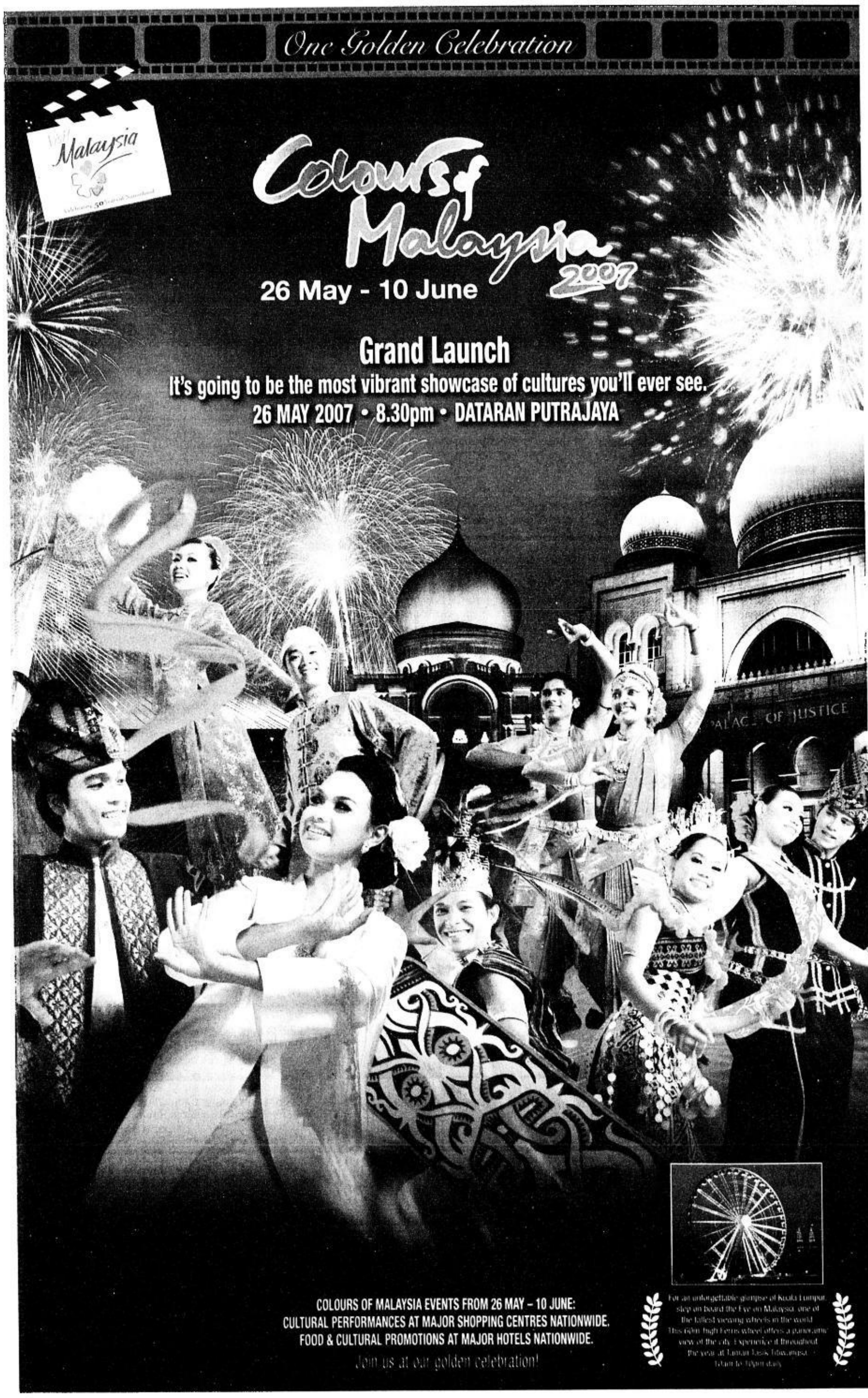
WE FIND IT ALARMING THAT FERDINnand Gaite of the National Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) is proposing that the Government Service Insurance System stop using advertisements to tell its members and pensioners about the developments as regards their benefits. ("Pensioners don't need ads," INQUIRER, 4/20/07)

Admittedly, the ad we placed in the INQUIRER entailed costs, but we believe it was money well spent because it helped us send our message to our clientele. We also regularly send out press releases, but we know that press releases on their own are not enough to disseminate information. We need the clarity and prominence that advertisements provide.

More importantly, we have to point out that Gaite's suggestion sets a very dangerous precedent. It tells the government to stop placing ads about bidding invitations, vacancies, audited financial statements and other important notices.

There goes transparency.

—ELLA E. VALENCERINA,
vice president, Public Affairs Office, Government Service Insurance System, Financial Center, Pasay City



Libel cases: It's up to FG, says lawyer

I WRITE CONCERNING THE NEWS STORY "Lawyer: Mike A should pursue cases despite docs' orders." (INQUIRER, 4/23/07)

The report was based on an informal conversation I had with INQUIRER reporter Juliet Labog-Javellana at the St. Luke's Hospital lobby. She asked me whether my client, Jose Miguel Arroyo, would drop his libel cases pursuant to his doctors' orders. I told her that as far as I knew, the First Gentleman was instructed to avoid stressful activities. Asked if pursuing the cases was stressful, I replied that insofar as the cases in which he had testified were concerned, I could not imagine how they would be stressful for him.

I added that in the cases he has not testified in, I could only speculate. I said I knew of no legal reason which would compel Mr. Arroyo to drop the cases; neither was I advised if he had personal reasons for doing so. I did, however, made it clear that I had not discussed any of the cases with Mr. Arroyo from the time he was confined right after Easter.

Unfortunately, the story gave the impression that I am opposed to Mr. Arroyo's dropping the cases. Ramon Tulfo took this further and wrote in his April 24 Bandera column that I was goading Mr. Arroyo to pursue the cases, even against doctors' orders.

For the record: I have no recommendation on whether or not the First Gentleman should pursue his libel cases. I do not foment or encourage litigation, as that contravenes the ethical norms lawyers live by.

As a lawyer I will abide, without reservation, by any decision Mr. Arroyo will make about what to do with any of the cases I am handling for him. As his friend, I will be happy for any decision he may make, whatever his reasons.

—RUY ALBERTO S. RONDAIN,
counsel for Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, Esq., Rondain & Mendiola Law Offices, 405 One Magnificent Mile, 39 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City

My story was a faithful account of what he told me at the St. Luke's lobby, his words exactly as he recalled in this letter. I have nothing to do with the impression he thinks the story created.

—JULIET LABOG-JAVELLANA

Why press is being sued

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG IN SUING PEOple who practice their profession in an abhorrent manner. In his column "Again, libel" (INQUIRER, 4/19/07), Conrado de Quiros sounded like he was asking everybody: "Let's praise the media," even if the media had failed to stay within the limits of press freedom.

Out of 10 news reports, how many of them have any basis or proof? Indeed, the media need to know their limits. (It would be helpful if the media come out with an article on the limits of press freedom.)

The media keep track of the number of media men who have been killed, but the media do not say who among those killed abused their profession. A case in point was a well-known media practitioner in Davao City who was killed some years ago. Why was he killed in the first place? All the articles published immediately after his death were full of praises and described him as a very lovable person. Yet, he was one of the most abusive media men. The articles bared the media's bias.

Had journalists asked people from Davao, most likely, only two out of every 10 would have recalled his "goodness."

Why do media men get sued for libel? Because they are not careful with what they report as news. Press freedom does exist but it has its limits.

—JURGEN VALDERRAMA,
jurgen_valderrama@yahoo.com

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Writers, educators ask SC to stop EO on English

By Leila B. Salaverria

PROMINENT WRITERS AND EDUCATORS have asked the Supreme Court to block the implementation of Executive Order No. 210 issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo which requires, among other things, the use of English as the medium of instruction in the public schools.

The petitioners said the use of English had caused the deterioration of the education system in the country and put the poorer students at a disadvantage. It also, ironically, has hampered the students' ability to learn English as well as alienated them from their cultural heritage.

They said using Filipino or the regional languages to teach the students would help them learn better, as shown by studies.

The petitioners included writer Isagani R. Cruz, who heads Wika ng Kultura at Agham Inc. which is composed of writers, educators and cultural workers; National Artists for Literature Virgilio Almario and Bienvenido Lumbera; Romulo Baquiran Jr. of the Filipinas Institute of Translation Inc.; Aurora Batnag and Efren Abueg of the Samahan ng Mga Salin Inc.; Beverly Siy of the Linangan sa Retorika at Arte; INQUIRER columnist and professor Randolf David, and writers and professors Nicanor Tiongson, Rosario Torres-Yu, Jovy Peregrino, Vina Paz, Abdon Balde, Theresa de Villa, Fanny Garcia, Juan Gatbonton and Galileo Zafra.

Minor schoolchildren, represented by their fathers Roberto Añonuevo, Michael Coroza and Victor Nadera, were among the petitioners.

Named respondents were President Arroyo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

The petitioners asked the high court to issue a temporary restraining order on the implementation of EO 210 and Department of Education Order No. 36 which enforced the EO, and to declare the two orders null and void after a hearing.

EO 210 mandates that English be made the primary medium of instruction in all public high schools and should be taught as a second language at all levels.

The petitioners said the EO and DepEd order violated the Constitution, which states that the government should "sustain the use of Filipino as the medium of official communication and as the language of instruction in the educational system."

The Constitution also states that the regional languages should be the auxiliary media of instruction.

"The failure of respondents to implement Filipino and the regional languages as the primary media of instruction has led to serious difficulties in learning among schoolchildren in elementary and high school, including herein petitioner minors, which has led to ineffective communication in the classrooms, low academic achievement and a high dropout rate," the petitioners said.

They said using English to teach most subjects in elementary school resulted in children from the lower socioeconomic classes ending up as "functional illiterates."

"The harmful effects of using a foreign language for learning are not just limited to low academic achievement and cognitive growth, it impairs the emotional security and sense of self-worth and the ability to participate meaningfully in the educational process by lower-class children who develop an inferiority complex as they are stigmatized by their use of the native tongue," they said.

The petitioners said government and institutional studies had shown that elementary schoolchildren could not learn how to read and write in English, and that the use of Filipino would enable them to learn to read and write since it is easy for them to understand.

"Studies have shown that this change will make students stay in school longer, learn better, quicker and more permanently, and will in fact be able to use the first language as a bridge to more effective learning in English and Filipino," they said.

The petition was filed at the Supreme Court Wednesday last week by Cruz, Almario, Baquiran and congressional candidate and Ateneo professor Danton Remoto.

Cruz and Almario stressed the petitioners were not against English per se, since most of them wrote in the language, but for the improvement of the educational system.

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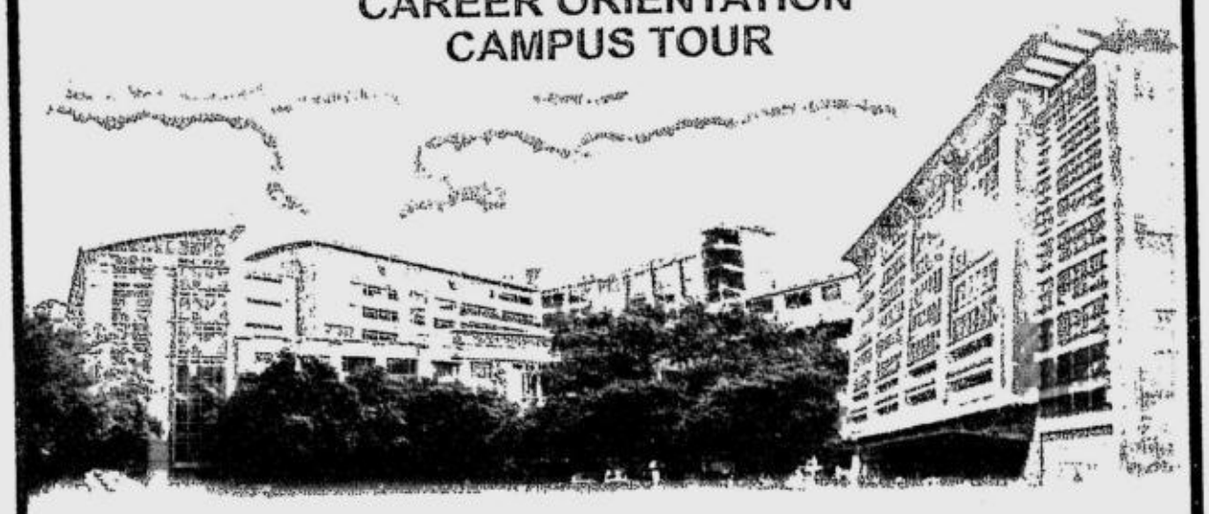

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TI No. 2 on SEC's top 1,000 firms with sales of ₱158B

DALLAS-BASED TEXAS INSTRUMENTS Inc. manufactures semiconductors, projectors and other education tools like calculators. Founded in 1930 as Geophysical Service, TI initially specialized in geophysical exploration, designing and building its own equipment in its New Jersey laboratory.

TI now has operations in more than 25 countries, employing some 31,000 people worldwide. It was ranked 162nd in Fortune 500's Ranking for 2007.

TI first entered the Philippines in 1979 in Baguio City, where it conducts final assembly and testing of semiconductors for computer, aerospace, telecommunications and automotive industries in the United States, Asia and Europe.

With sales amounting to P158.6 billion, it was ranked 2nd in the Securities and Exchange Commission's Top 5,000 Philippine Corporations (2005 edition).

Last year, it received the "Energy Efficiency & Conservation Award" and the "Outstanding Energy Manager Award" from the Department of Energy. In 2005, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources gave it the "Merit Citation Award."

The company received the "Outstanding Environmental Performance Award" from the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in 2005 and 2003. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

BAGUIO CITY hosts the US-based Texas Instruments Inc., which is the world's biggest maker of mobile phone chips. TI chose the Philippines over China for the expansion of its assembly/test operations. The new site will be at the Clark Freeport Zone in Pampanga. REUTERS

Texas Instruments picks RP over China for $1-B plant

From page A1

She said this was a sure sign that the Philippines had found its niche as one of the best investment destinations in Asia.

The TI plant in Baguio conducts final assembly and testing of semiconductors for TI's customers in the computer, aerospace, telecommunications and automotive industries in the United States, Asia and Europe.

New site in Clark

"The new site in Clark will incorporate many of the leadership environmental design features that are first used by Texas Instruments in the United States," Ms Arroyo said.

TI senior vice president Kevin Ritchie said the Philippines was up against Thailand and China as possible sites of TI's new plant.

"After a period of time we narrowed it down to China and the Philippines and then we made the final selection of the Philippines," Ritchie said at a press briefing in Malacañang.

Performance of Baguio site

Ritchie said TI considered a lot of factors, including the incentives offered by the particular country and the availability and quality of the work force.

"At the end of the day, what brought us to the Philippines was really the performance of our site in Baguio. TI has a 28-year history in the Philippines, and the Baguio site is one of the best sites we have in TI. The quality of the people there, the quality of the operation gave us high confidence we would be able to set up a new site (in Clark)," he said.

"We're very happy and proud to be announcing this expansion today. We look forward to a very successful facility that will be a showcase both for the Philippines and TI long into the future," Ritchie said.

Start production in 2008

Ritchie said work on the 77,000-square-meter site would begin in July or August this year and production would start by the second half of 2008.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said the TI expansion in Clark would be done over a 10-year period.

"I believe the $1 billion is just the initial amount that will be poured into this project and, of course, this would lead to more jobs in the next coming years," Favila said.

Up to 10,000 new jobs

At a subsequent briefing at the Department of Trade and Industry, Favila said TI's expansion project could cost up to $1.7 billion and create a total of 10,000 new jobs at full capacity,

Favila said the eight hectares at Clark that TI would initially develop had been declared a special economic zone.

"This is the first ecozone to be located in a freeport zone," he said. "The Philippine Economic Zone Authority would be administering the area."

Suppliers

CFZ chair Rizalino Navarro and CFZ president Levi Laus have said they are eyeing another 30 ha for the possible location of TI's major suppliers.

"(TI officials) say that they have about 500 suppliers and that they were in talks with at least three who already signified interest to put up their own facilities nearby," Favila said.

He said TI only asked for a secure and stable supply of electricity and water.

In Malacañang, Ritchie credited Norberto Viera, president of TI Philippines, for the successful operation of TI Baguio. He said Viera would also head the operations in Clark.

"We thank the government for all the support it has given us not only for this project but also for TI in Baguio for the last 28 years," Viera said.

Navarro said the CFZ would support its newest and biggest locator. "We look forward to 28 years of very harmonious relations with you," he said.

One of top exporters

Lilia de Lima, Philippine Economic Zone Authority chief, said TI was one of the country's top exporters.

"(This) is a most welcome thing for the Filipinos because of the job generation, export earnings, transfer of technology and the many community projects (of TI) just like what it did in Baguio as part of its corporate social responsibility," De Lima said.

Electronic exports make up nearly 70 percent of Philippine shipments abroad and are a key driver for the economy.

Mike Clancy, chief executive of the Philippine Business Leaders Forum, said the deal would help burnish the country's tarnished image as an investment destination.

The Philippines attracted $2.35 billion in foreign investments last year, much less than its Southeast Asian neighbors.

A survey by Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy recently found the Philippines to be one of the most corrupt countries in Asia to do business in. *With reports from Ronnel W. Domingo and AFP*

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STL rigging seen to raise poll funds

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—SMALL TOWN LOTtery (STL) bettors have reported suspicions that several draws have been rigged to get more money for the electoral campaign of local candidates in Pampanga.

At least four bettors sent text messages to the INQUIRER on Wednesday to report their complaints.

Henry Abejuela, STL operations chief of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office in Pampanga, did not reply to a call and text message to confirm the complaints.

PCSO STL project manager Romualdo Quiñones said on Thursday that in STL, rigging was "impossible to do."

> 'The same numbers keep showing up. That's robbery...'

"The draw is similar to the lotto's. Perhaps there are some people who want to discredit the STL project," he said.

When the INQUIRER went to see one of the complainants, a resident in Barangay Dolores here, he showed a "salida bola"—"cotejo" to others—or a list of the winning pairs of numbers from April 1 to May 2.

In STL, bettors wager on two numbers. The choices range from 1 to 40. A winning combination wins P700 for every peso bet. Draws are held thrice daily, supposedly done by the mechanical picking of two out of 40 number-marked balls inside a transparent, air-tight box at the custody of a local PCSO office.

The list showed that at least three pairs of numbers had come out twice. These were the pair 33-33 on April 4 and 16 morning draws; 12-20 on April 8 and 16 noon draws; and 33-26 on April 29 noon and April 30 morning draws.

"The same numbers keep showing up. That's robbery," said the man who is in his 60s. He said he observed these did not happen so often in past elections.

Asked if the trend of recurring number pairs was possible in STL, Quiñones replied: "The numbers that come out are beyond any human intervention so combinations may come out anytime (at) at any draw."

According to him, draws that are held in Apalit town are "always open to the general public to prove that everything is transparent." The draws, he said, are held at 114 Sidcor Building in Barangay Sampaloc in Apalit town.

The bettor also noted there were many "kaskas" or numbers that were similar to the previous draws. He counted at least eight numbers of this kind.

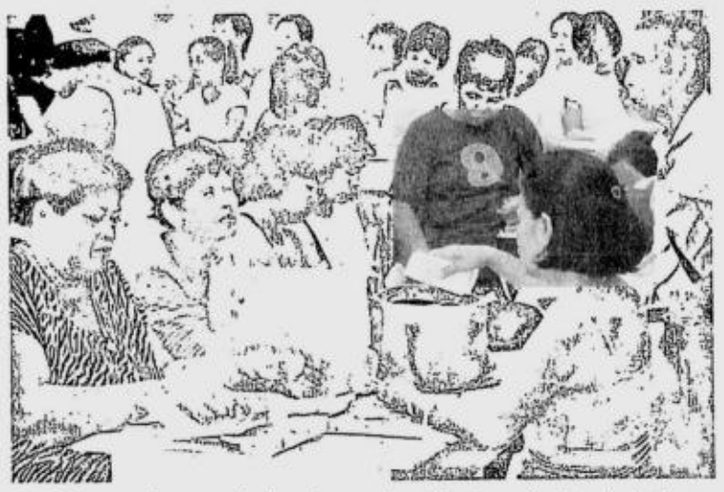
"It's clear that they often rake money so that they would have money to spend for politics. Perhaps it is like that because they use the money to buy votes," the man said.

Asked why he was grumbling about this, he explained: "I'm a bettor. I spend P100 or more a day on the game. I don't want to be cheated."

Like in "jueteng," the winning numbers are displayed in STL stations, usually a one-table affair in the public market, or are announced by collectors. Like in jueteng, too, the winners and their prize money are not publicly announced.

Two collectors in San Fernando confirmed getting similar complaints from other bettors.

"Some do not want to bet anymore because their ways of determining their pet numbers are messed up," a collector said. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



SMALL town lottery, designed to replace "jueteng," attracts bettors for having the same features as the illegal numbers game that it seeks to eradicate. INQUIRER PHOTO

'Jueteng' men called to help in Bong Pineda wife's gov bid

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—SUSpected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda has met with 2,000 *kabo* (area managers) and *kubrador* (collectors) of the illegal numbers game on Wednesday night and tapped their help in the gubernatorial campaign of his wife, Board Member Lilia Pineda, according to her rival, Catholic priest Eddie Panlilio in a statement here on Thursday.

Pineda, 57, could not be reached for comment. He earlier told the INQUIRER he was not running jueteng or STL in Pampanga.

Panlilio said he learned of the meeting from a collector in Bacolor town who was present in the gathering held at the farm-resort of Bacolor Mayor Romeo Dungca in Barangay Macabacle, also in Bacolor.

Reached by phone, Dungca said it was he who invited Bong Pineda to come to his place.

"I told him there are many people in my resort and that Nanay Baby (Lilia) is not here so would he care to come over, meet them, talk to them about her campaign," the mayor said.

Dungca admitted that the crowd comprised of "some STL collectors from Bacolor, but many were barrio folks."

Panlilio said he has reasons to be "alarmed" about the meeting because it showed the "apparent role of jueteng in the campaign of Lilia Pineda." He has campaigned on a platform of good governance, with plans to stop jueteng and quarry corruption, issues that are linked to Lilia Pineda, 56, and reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid, 28.

Sorry

At the same time, Panlilio said he "felt sorry for these workers whose only interest is to earn a living for their families. They are being used in electoral campaigning."

Those who came reportedly work in the City of San Fernando and in the towns of Sta. Ana, Mexico and Bacolor—all in the province's third district.

The informant reported not seeing Lilia Pineda in the meeting. Reached by phone, she said she did not know about the event.

An INQUIRER source involved in her campaign could not confirm the meeting either but surmised that if Bong Pineda indeed held one, it could be his own initiative to help his wife. Lilia Pineda had said that in the 19 years that she held public office, her husband had stayed out of politics. The net worth of his wealth is not known.

Panlilio's source claimed that Bong Pineda arrived at midnight and gave a brief speech. "(He asked us) to ensure the winning of Baby (Lilia's nickname)."

Bong Pineda was said to have also spoken against the priest by saying, "This early he's been begging for money."

The informant took that to mean that Panlilio was making money out of the donations to his campaign.

Donations

Panlilio said his campaign is run on private donations that are "properly accounted for by a finance committee and judiciously used by (my) campaign managers."

The informant reported that collectors were not given money yet. He believed that money could come later because their area managers "remained for another meeting with 1-2." Those numbers are the name they call Bong Pineda, a native of Lubao town.

Also on Thursday, Lapid fielded personnel to check on reports that money was being distributed in the meetings of Lilia Pineda at a restaurant here and in Cutud, Arayat. Pineda said the reports were "not true."

The Wednesday meeting, and the reported incidents of vote-buying, saw Panlilio making appeals to voters to "choose candidates who are good, honest and genuinely committed to public good." *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Solon warns of poll fraud in Lanao Sur

MARAWI CITY—LANAO DEL Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon Jr. said massive cheating could take place in his province unless the Commission on Elections (Comelec) takes steps to purge its list of "flying voters."

Macarambon, who is running in the Lanao del Sur gubernatorial race under President Macapagal-Arroyo's Kampi party, claimed that about one-fourth of the more than 400,000 registered voters in the province are "outsiders" or non-residents.

ELEKSYON 2007

"They are Christian voters from neighboring provinces and cities hauled by unscrupulous politicians," he said.

Macarambon did not specify how he got this information.

His rivals, reelectionist Gov. Bashier Manalao (Liberal Party), Mamintal Adiong (Lakas), and incumbent Marawi City Mayor Omar Solitario Ali (PDSP), could not be reached for comment.

But independent vice gubernatorial candidate Mino Arimao urged Macarambon to file a formal complaint at the Comelec.

"Such accusation should be backed up by evidences (sic) and (be) filed at the office of the provincial Comelec office," Arimao said.

Lanao del Sur was one of the provinces where votes were rigged in favor of Ms Arroyo in 2004, according to the opposition.

With 11 days to go before the May 14 elections, the Comelec in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) virtually washed its hands of the possibility of electoral fraud taking place in the region.

In a meeting with the local media and the police here, lawyer Rey Sumalipao, ARMM election chief, said the Church-based Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) should be blamed instead.

Sumalipao said while the Comelec could only employ two contractual personnel per voting precinct, the PPCRV has committed to deploy more election watchers in polling places.

"If and when cheating takes place, do not blame the Comelec, blame the PPCRV, which promised to deploy poll watchers. How can the Comelec manage to watch, when we have only two workers for each precinct in the field?" he said in a security briefing here.

PPCRV chair Tita de Villa told reporters that, because of lack of funds, her group was more into voter education and networking with other civil society organizations to attain its goal of fielding more watchers.

Sammy Maulana, head of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society Organizations based here, said Sumalipao's remarks were unfair to a citizenry seeking reforms in the country's electoral process.

In Zamboanga City, Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad said he did not allow PPCRV to deploy watchers in his province.

He said this was mainly for security reasons.

Jumoad said during the 2004 elections, two priests assigned to his diocese were nearly killed while overseeing PPCRV's poll watchers.

"(Besides) we experienced that cheating is not on the precinct level, cheating is done in the Comelec," he said. *Charlie Señase, Edwin Fernandez, Nash Maulana and Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

PRESSING MATTER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A boy appears not to be interested in an ongoing campaign of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who is running for reelection. Lacson's campaign staff, however, said the boy's presence alone in the rally shows his parents were interested in the candidate's platform of good governance and firm action.

Susan Roces endorses JDV opponent

DAGUPAN CITY—ACTRESS SUsan Roces endorsed on Monday the congressional bid of Mayor Benjamin Lim, who is running against Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. in Pangasinan's fourth district.

Roces, who was guest during the Bangus Festival celebration here, said she was endorsing Lim because of his principles and love for country, "which are the qualities that are inherent to Pangasinenses."

"He has principles," Roces told reporters here.

"Are you surprised I am supporting Benjie Lim in his bid for Congress? It's because he didn't ask me to. Endorsements are volunteered. People do not have to ask. If one deserves an endorsement, people who know you will just volunteer," she said.

She said she considers Lim as one of her real friends and that of her late husband, action star Fernando Poe Jr., who traced his roots to San Carlos City and Mangatarem town.

"As much as possible, if there is an occasion in the province, we make it a point to come, most especially in memory of the grandparents of my husband. So, we feel for the Pangasinenses. I look forward to [bring] some improvements here in Pangasinan most especially the hospitals—the health care—*na napapabayaan* (that have been neglected)," Roces said.

She said Lim knows what Pangasinan needs. "He knows first hand the plight of the Pangasinenses. He knows what is hurting or where the pain is coming from," she said.

She said another problem that ails Pangasinan is the lack of irrigation support for farmers.

She said she is very careful about the people or products she endorses because what is at stake is her credibility.

"But I'm proud of the candidate I'm endorsing because I know him just as I know whatever product I endorse because I know the product," she said.

"Let's just put it this way, we keep our fingers crossed. As long as *patas ang labanan* (the fight would be waged fairly), we stand to support him [Lim] to be able to make a good fight." *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Party-list group accused of buying votes

DAVAO CITY—MILITANT GROUPS here have threatened to file charges against the Kalahi party-list group for alleged vote-buying.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) said Kalahi, which has the son of Malacañang ally Rep. Prospero Nograles as a second nominee, has been distributing grocery items to voters in the city.

Kalahi is supposedly a party-list for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

A crew from the local station of ABS-CBN here also managed to take footage of the distribution, held in the Kalahi headquarters in Barangay Ma-a here a few days ago.

ABS-CBN said one of their cameramen was harassed by a burly man while taking footage.

ABS-CBN said it suspected that the unidentified man was working for Nograles or Kalahi.

Nograles said he was not informed of the incident, which ABS-CBN said took place near a police station.

He also denied that those working for him were harassing the media.

Omar Bantayan, KMU secretary general for Southern Mindanao, said they were consulting their lawyer on the appropriate case to be filed against the party-list group.

"We will discuss the possible actions to take," he said.

Bantayan said they have evidence that Kalahi was indeed soliciting votes by giving away grocery items.

He said a member of his group was among those who received grocery items during a Kalahi distribution in San Rafael village in Barangay Ma-a on Saturday.

The items had stickers of the Kalahi party-list on it, he said.

Nograles' son, Karlo, denied the distribution of grocery items was bribery.

He said those who received the items are supporters of the party-list group, who have pledged to become watchers on Election Day.

He said the distribution was done after a briefing on the duties of the poll watchers.

Based on the Omnibus Election Code, the giving of money or distribution of items to voters during the election period is considered vote-buying.

If proven, the accused individual or group will be disqualified.

In Lanao del Norte, politicians are into a "poster war" to entice support for their candidacy.

Iligan City council candidate Mario Ferraren said posters are very important for advancing the political bids of candidates.

This, he said, explains why the city has literally become a poster capital during the past days.

In Cotabato City, the Genuine Opposition has petitioned the Comelec to relieve city election registrar Arlan Mangelen.

GO mayoral bet Estrellita Juliano has petitioned Commissioner Rene Sarmiento, the commissioner in-charge of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, to replace Mangelen for being a non-lawyer.

Juliano said it is Comelec policy that only lawyers could serve as senior poll officials. *Rizalene P. Acac, Ryan D. Rosauro and Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

Resuello slay suspect presented

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—Philippine National Police chief, Director General Oscar Calderon, presented to reporters on Thursday one of the suspects in the killing of San Carlos City Mayor Julian Resuello and his security aide Eulogio Martinez, but said the police work was not over yet as they were still looking for the mastermind.

Calderon said Angelito Soriano was a "principal suspect by direct participation" and that the police were searching for the "principal suspect by inducement" or the one who ordered him to kill Resuello.

Soriano was being detained at the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group office at the provincial police headquarters here after he was taken from a hospital where he was being treated for a bullet wound in the foot.

On Wednesday, police filed double murder and multiple frustrated murder charges against Soriano, Cesar de Guzman and two other suspects at the San Carlos City prosecutor's office.

Calderon said the slugs found at the crime scene were similar to those used in the killing of Mapandan Vice Mayor Adolfo Aquino in 2005.

"The slugs and the empty shells have the same identities so it means (the suspects) are hired guns," he said.

Police are looking at politics as the motive for Resuello's murder as De Guzman, one of the suspects in the killing, was reportedly working for another politician in San Carlos City.

De Guzman, alias Kabesa, is still at large and a P500,000 reward is being offered for any information that will lead to his arrest.

The money was contributed by concerned citizens in the province, according to Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Ilocos region police director.

Police showed a video clip, taken during the coronation night on Saturday when Resuello was shot, that captured an image of a man in white shirt and white cap who was "holding something heavy."

The image was that of De Guzman. The footage also showed Soriano's arm around De Guzman.

Resuello's son Julier, now the city mayor, thanked police for solving the crime. "Our family is happy that the suspect has been arrested but we hope that the mastermind will be unmasked soon," he said.

"I ask for your prayers and if you have information on the other suspect, please inform the authorities. You may send the information through text messages," he said.

He also said his family has asked the National Bureau of Investigation to help solve the case.

Julier said he did not know any of the suspects, although Supt. Manuel Velasco, CIDG provincial head and head of Task Force Resuello, said De Guzman used to work with the slain mayor years ago.

Group of mayors tells police: Solve murder

ILOILO CITY—THE COUNTRY'S city mayors called on the police to immediately solve the murder of San Carlos City Mayor Julian Resuello in Pangasinan.

"We call upon the Philippine National Police to act with urgency and determination to solve this murder and bring his killers to justice," said Mayor Jerry Treñas, president of the 118-member League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP).

Treñas said the city mayors also called on authorities "to swiftly arrest all those implicated to (sic) this murder including those who did not pull the trigger but have been part of the plotting for (sic) this merciless attack."

Treñas added, "we further call on any members of the community that may have information on this case to come forward so that these murderers may face the full might of the law."

On Monday, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) placed the province of Pangasinan under Comelec control, authorizing the commission to take charge of police forces to prevent more bloodshed.

"We condemn all election-related violence incidents," said Treñas.

"This act of savagery committed by the assassins does not deserve a place in a civilized and peace-loving society... the league commits itself in supporting a peaceful, honest, orderly and credible election," Treñas added. *David Israel Sinay, Inquirer Visayas*

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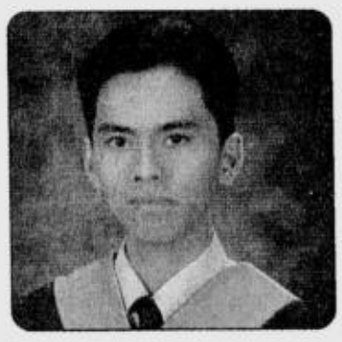

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Bets told to take stand on Sierra Madre dam

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—A CATHOLIC priest and known protector of Sierra Madre mountain ranges in northern Quezon dared local and national candidates to declare their position on the controversial dam project in the mountain river.

"Task Force Sierra Madre (TFSM) challenges local and national candidates to support its position against Laiban Dam. Our lives and the next generation's can never be equated with a 50-year project," Fr. Pete Montallana, TFSM chair, said in a phone interview.

Alarmed over the planned dam project in Tanay, Rizal, and General Nakar, Quezon, Montallana expressed fear that the proposed dam inside the mountain watershed would displace approximately 3,500 families living in seven barangays in Tanay and one barangay in General Nakar.

Montallana said the resulting diminished water flow in the Agos River could affect navigation, irrigation, fisheries in the river and its estuaries.

He also expressed alarm that the project location, which is near geologic faults, would endanger the lives of people living near the proposed dam.

"In the event that the dam breaks, a repeat of the destructive flood in 2004 can result in deaths," he said.

The Laiban, then known as the Kaliwa-Kanan (left-right) rivers, traverses the slopes of the Sierra Madre and drains into the Pacific shoreline on the side of Quezon province.

During the Marcos regime, the dam project was proposed to be a part of the so-called industrial complex plan in northeastern Luzon.

But due to the strong opposition to the project being waged by indigenous peoples, the project was shelved—leaving only two diversion tunnels as grim reminders of the aborted project.

The Arroyo administration plans to resurrect the controversial project of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage System with financial assistance worth $1 billion from the Asian Development Bank.

The Task Force Kalikasan (TFK), a multisectoral environmentalist group in General Nakar town, condemned the passage of Resolution No. 2007-21 by the Sangguniang Bayan allowing the construction of a hydroelectric power plant along Kanan River in the upper part of the Sierra Madre.

In a statement, the group said the council resolution was done "haphazardly, hurriedly, secretively and without prior public consultation and participation."

The TFK also noted that the Kanan River is in an area declared a hot spot for conservation by the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Priorities.

Antique check distribution questioned

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—RIVALS OF REELECTIONIST Antique Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez have asked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to disqualify her for allegedly violating the ban on public spending during the election period.

In an eight-page joint petition filed before the Comelec office in Antique on April 23, former assemblyman Arturo Pacificador and former Rep. Jovito Plameras Jr. sought the disqualification of Perez and seven of her partymates in the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC).

Pacificador and Plameras are gubernatorial bets of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan and Lakas-CMD.

Pacificador and Plameras alleged that Perez and her co-respondents gave out checks to officials of six barangays on April 10 during a program to resume the construction of a bridge in Barangay Solong in Sibalom, Antique.

The checks were drawn from the account of the provincial government at the Development Back of the Philippines branch in Antique.

Perez denied that she committed any violation.

"The checks were issued on March 29 but its actual delivery to the barangays was only delayed due to bureaucratic red tape," Perez said.

ELEKSYON 2007

"It is political gimmick and harassment. They accused eight of us and made a big fuss out of this because they want to cripple our slate," said Perez.

She said she has ordered a stop to the payments of all the checks until after the elections because she does not want these to be used as a "propaganda tool."

Valera backer nabbed

BAGUIO CITY—The Abra police filed charges against Mayor Antonio Domes-ag of Peñarrubia, Abra, for violating the total gun ban in the province after a cache of long firearms was discovered in his house on Wednesday.

Members of Task Force Abra were pursuing a suspect in an attempted murder case, Ferdinand Fernandez, when he hid in Domes-ag's farm house in Peñarrubia. They arrested Fernandez but also discovered an AK-47 assault rifle, two 12-gauge shotguns, a .22 cal. rifle, .38 cal. revolver and several bullets in Domes-ag's house.

Police arrested Domes-ag for violating the total gun ban imposed by Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. in Abra.

Domes-ag was taken to the Abra Provincial Hospital when his blood pressure shot up after his arrest.

Police are filing illegal possession of firearms against Domes-ag while a separate case will be filed against Fernandez for attempted murder. Domes-ag is reportedly a supporter of Gov. Vicente Valera. *Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Ecija bet replaced by wife

SAN JOSE CITY—Reelectionist Mayor Alexander Belena withdrew from the race on Wednesday and fielded his wife as his replacement.

Belena's running mate, Mario Salvador, however, is supporting another candidate for mayor who happens to be his wife Veronica.

Mayor Belena, who was running for his third and last term under the Lakas-CMD, withdrew from the race for personal reasons. His wife, Marivic, filed her certificate of candidacy as his replacement. *Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon*

PNOC Exploration Corporation

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Deadline for submission of sealed bids is on **May 28, 2007, not later than 2:00 p.m.**, and will be opened on the same date 3:00 p.m. at PNOC Exploration Corporation, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

PNOC-EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality found therein and accepts such bids as maybe considered most advantageous to its interest. The decision of PNOC-EC shall be final and binding.

IER/BOB

(Sgd.) Irvin A. Sarsoza
Admin & HR Manager

(PDI–May 4, 5 & 6, 2007)

Rasul receives Muslim Democrat award from US-based group

RASUL

AMINA RASUL-BERNARDO, THE lead convenor of the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and editor of the Moro Times, was named Muslim Democrat of the Year by the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID) in ceremonies held on April 27.

The awarding ceremony was the highlight of the CSID 8th annual conference.

This year's theme was "Women's Rights in Muslim Communities and Islam."

The Muslim Democrat of the Year award is given by CSID to an outstanding advocate of democracy in the Muslim world, particularly to an individual who overcomes hardships or challenges in efforts to promote democracy.

The CSID is a nonprofit organization based in Washington and is dedicated to studying Islamic and democratic political thought and merging them into a modern Islamic democratic discourse.

Rasul follows a distinguished list of past Muslim Democrat awardees that includes former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim; Saadeddine Elothmani, secretary general of the Party of Justice and Development of Morocco; Iranian scholar Abdolkarim Soroush, and Egyptian democracy activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim.

In her speech during the 8th CSID Annual Conference held at the George Washington University, Rasul said the rise of violent extremism in Muslim communities can be checked by genuine democratization.

"Killing the terrorists will not end terrorism," Rasul said. "Genuine democracy, which will provide more space for the marginalized (like Muslim women) will be better able to temper this inclination toward extremist advocacies."

"Stable, democratic, just societies," she added, "can best deal with extremism."

Rasul said "women's rights in democratizing or democratic Muslim societies are like canaries in a coal mine during the industrial age of the West."

"If the canaries are safe, so is the coal mine. Thus if women's rights are strong, so is society."

Although she does not see herself as a Muslim feminist, Rasul has been a champion of women and minority rights.

Pichay caravan readies for Manila

SENATORIAL CANDIDATE PROSPERO PICHAY Jr.'s Luzon-wide caravan prepared for its final push into Metro Manila after its three contingents from Northern Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Bicol converged Thursday.

In a tour of Cavite, the fifth among the provinces with the biggest voting population, reelectionist Gov. Irineo Maliksi expressed his support for Pichay, a statement sent to the INQUIRER said.

On the first day of the Cavite leg of the caravan, "Super Pichay," the Visayan-Ilocano representative's mascot, accompanied him as he stomped through the towns of Carmona, General Mariano Alvarez, Silang, Bacoor, Kawit, Noveleta, Rosario, Tanza, General Trias and Trece Martirez City. *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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QMMC Compound, Project 4, Quezon City
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT REGION 4A, QMMC Compound, Project 4, Quezon City, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB), to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

PACKAGE I

Total Amount of Approved Budget for Contract	Php 8,754,623.40
Name of Contract	Proposed Rehabilitation of Comfort Rooms
Location	Cavite Naval Station Hospital, Cavite City
Brief Description	
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 2,762,763.41
Contract Duration	
Name of Contract	Installation of Sprinkler Type Fire Protection System
Location	Cavite Naval Station Hospital, Cavite City
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 2,372,716.55
Contract Duration	
Name of Contract	Rehabilitation of Electrical Distribution System & Lightning Fixtures
Location	Cavite Naval Station Hospital, Cavite City
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 1,616,440.96
Contract Duration	
Name of Contract	Construction of Ramp
Location	Cavite Naval Station Hospital, Cavite City
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 2,372,716.55
Contract Duration	

PACKAGE II

Total Amount of Approved Budget for Contract	Php 6,500,000.00
Name of Contract	Rehabilitation of Building (Army Station Hospital)
Location	Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal
Brief Description	
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 6,500,000.00
Contract Duration	

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract.

The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities are as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	May 10 to May 16, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	May 11 to May 16, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	May 16, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	May 21, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 18 to May 25, 2007
6. Pre-Bid Conference	May 29, 2007
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	June 14, 2007

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at QMMC Compound, Project 4, Quezon City, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 1,000.00 to the CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT REGION 4A Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 4,000.00 to the CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT REGION 4A Cashier.

The CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT REGION 4A assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

NOEL G. PASION, MD, MPH
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 4, 2007)

PHILCOMSAT HOLDINGS CORPORATION
Telecoms Plaza, 316 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City Tel. 815-8406

NOTICE TO ALL BANKS, STOCKHOLDERS, AFFILIATES, CLIENTS, SUPPLIERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

On 12 APRIL 2007, the REGIONAL TRIAL COURT of MAKATI CITY issued an ORDER in CIVIL CASE NO. 04-1049 entitled "Philippine Communications Satellite Corporation represented by Victor Africa vs. Philcomsat Holdings Corporation, Luis K. Lokin, Jr., Enrique L. Locsin and Philip Brodett", which states:

"WHEREFORE, premises considered, the Court hereby grants the plaintiff's Motion. Let a writ of execution be issued directing the implementation of the following orders:

1) the individuals elected by defendant [Enrique] Locsin in the 2004 PHC ASM, and so proclaimed to be PHC's board of directors, namely: Enrique Locsin, Julio Jalandoni, Manuel Andal, Luis Lokin, Jr., Prudencio Somera, Jr., Manuel H. Nieto, Jr., Roberto V. San Jose, Philip Brodett, Oliverio Laperal, Benito Araneta and Roberto Abad and all their representatives or agents are enjoined from continuing to act as PHC board of directors;

2) the proxy of plaintiff issued to Victor V. Africa is declared valid and thus, the individuals elected by plaintiff's proxy in the 2004 PHC ASM namely: Victor V. Africa, Erlinda I. Bildner, Katrina Ponce-Enrile, Honorio Poblador III, Federico Agcaoili, Sylvia K. Ilusorio and Jose Ma. Ozamiz are declared as the valid board of directors of PHC; and

3) the defendants are directed to render an accounting of funds of PHC since 2004 up to the present within 15 days from the finality of this Order.

SO ORDERED."

On 24 APRIL 2007, pursuant to the above-quoted ORDER and the Writ of Execution dated 20 APRIL 2007, the following were duly elected, recognized and declared as the legitimate and validly elected members of the Board of Directors of Philcomsat Holdings Corporation:

VICTOR V. AFRICA
ERLINDA I. BILDNER
KATRINA PONCE-ENRILE
HONORIO POBLADOR III
FEDERICO R. AGCAOILI
SYLVIA K. ILUSORIO
JOSE MA. OZAMIZ

Messrs. OLIVERIO G. LAPERAL, PABLO L. LOBREGAT and PRUDENCIO SOMERA were likewise elected as directors of Philcomsat Holdings Corporation. On the same APRIL 24, 2007 Board of Directors Meeting, Philcomsat Holdings Corporation elected new officers, changed bank signatories and brought back its principal office to Telecoms Plaza. On APRIL 26, 2007, a Temporary Restraining Order by the 14th Division of the Court of Appeals, Justice Magdangal de Leon, ponente, was issued to Makati RTC. Said TRO, which applies only to RTC Makati Branch 138 and not the private shareholders, is based on the second of two similar petitions filed at separate divisions at the Court of Appeals by Locsin, Brodett et al, which is a clear case of forum-shopping. Moreover, said TRO seeks to enjoin acts that have already been implemented and accomplished.

Notice is hereby given that any transaction entered into by Enrique Locsin, Manuel Andal, Julio Jalandoni, Luis Lokin, Jr., Philip Brodett, Benito Araneta, Roberto Abad, Johnny Tan, Roberto San Jose, Delfin Angeao and their representatives or agents, supposedly for and on behalf of the Corporation, are unauthorized and invalid and will not be honored by the Corporation.

Any information which may assist the legitimate board of Philcomsat Holdings Corporation in protecting and preserving the assets may be given thru Atty. Manzanal at cellphone # 0920-901-7221. Thank you.

Cory's phone bugged; AFP denies involvement

From page A1

"Naturally, the immediate suspect would be the government. It's just a bit worrisome because my mother is already old and retired. And when these things happen as the elections [draw] near, it clearly violates the law with impunity," he said.

The 74-year-old former President said she had suspected that her phone was bugged "ever since the martial law" period that started in 1972.

"I've been through the worst times," she told reporters at a press conference. "All of us in the opposition then were almost sure our phones were bugged. Even when I was President, there was some wiretapping also."

But she did not say who she thought had been tapping her phone.

'Very serious' matter

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through AFP information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, denied involvement.

Gonzales said he would look into the matter but did not think the government was responsible.

"Bugging a former President is very serious. I do not think [this should be done] even by the government. I will investigate and find the culprit," Gonzales told the INQUIRER by phone.

He added: "I will use all the resources of my office [to find out who did this]. I am taking this very seriously.

"I don't think it's the government [who did it]."

Asked why, Gonzales said: "*Susnaman*, the device used was very crude. It seems that it was meant to be found by Cory."

He said that he had watched Aquino's press conference where she showed the media the bugging device.

Asked who he thought might have been behind the bugging, Gonzales said: "You cannot rule out anything at this time. But I will find it very difficult to believe that the government will do something like this, which is very crazy."

He said there was "always that possibility" that the opposition was responsible.

But Gonzales stressed: "I do not want to jump to conclusions. Let me investigate first."

No comment from Palace

President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson refused to be drawn into the issue.

"I don't have any information on that. I am sorry I cannot comment," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said when asked about the eavesdropping device.

But he said that if the bugging of Aquino's phone line had indeed occurred, it should be looked into.

Asked to comment on speculation that the bugging was the government's handiwork, Bunye said: "It's very difficult to speculate on speculations. We will have an endless cycle of rumors. That's the least we need at this time, so we prefer not to make any comments. If there is such an incident, then this should be investigated by the authorities."

Bunye also brushed off a question on whether he could give an assurance that the government was not behind the bugging.

"If we respond to that [question], we might be validating or confirming something which did not happen at all. So I would prefer that this be investigated, if there is such an incident, and that the results of the investigation be made public," he said.

In a statement, PLDT confirmed that a maintenance crew found the device during a routine inspection of its facilities at about 3 p.m. on May 2.

Routine inspection

It said that upon opening the company's cross-connect cabinet located on Times Street, the crew found "an instrument which appeared to be a tape recorder attached to a black box."

PLDT added that after "further investigation," the crew discovered that the black box was connected to the phone line installed at Aquino's residence.

Per standard operating procedure, the crew removed the black box and took it to Aquino.

PLDT said it was conducting an investigation.

But QCPD director Gatdula said the servicemen should have called the police before disconnecting the bug found in PLDT cabinet No. 243.

Gatdula said PLDT personnel informed him of the discovery only yesterday morning.

"And they had already disassembled the device, purportedly to personally present the entire gadget to Mrs. Aquino," he told the INQUIRER.

"They should not have touched the device and left it inside the telephone box. But they said they wanted to inform Mrs. Aquino of the wiretapping activity, and that's why they took it out of the box and brought it to her house," he said.

Nevertheless, Gatdula said, he had ordered his men to thoroughly investigate the discovery of the bugging device made up of blue wiring, a black power supply adaptor, and an ordinary tape recorder.

He said the servicemen's immediate supervisor, Cesar Mendoza, had promised full cooperation with QCPD investigators.

A day later

The bugging device was discovered a day after Aquino sounded a call for the immediate disclosure of the fate of Jonas Joseph Burgos, the missing—and believed abducted—son of the late press freedom icon Joe Burgos.

"I appeal to the highest authorities of the land to send the clear signal to the field that Jonas Burgos must be surfaced immediately by whoever is holding him, and that no harm must come to him," the ex-President said in a statement.

But Gatdula said the illegal wiretapping should not be connected to Aquino's statement on the disappearance of the young Burgos.

Aquino had a falling out with Ms Arroyo in 2005, when she joined opposition figures in calling for the latter's resignation over allegations of vote-rigging in the 2004 presidential election.

The bugging device is now in the possession of the QCPD; the tape recorder purportedly containing phone conversations remains with Aquino on her reported request.

Gatdula said an initial examination of the device showed that it may not have been the handiwork of an expert: "It is so crude."

He also said police investigators would find out how those behind the bugging were able to gain access to the locked PLDT phone box.

'Anyone can do it'

Actually, anyone with the technical know-how can conduct a wiretapping operation now, the military's Bacarro told reporters.

"There was no effort by the AFP to bug the former President," he said, adding that the operation could have been conducted by some groups "whose interest for doing so is known only to them."

Bacarro said certain groups would take advantage of this discovery by again blaming the military: "We will be the easiest excuse, or the way out."

Asked whether the AFP had the capability to tap communication lines, Bacarro initially said he did not know.

But when reminded that the military had been conducting surveillance work on suspects, he said wiretapping could only be done by the AFP if it was covered by a court order.

Still, Bacarro said that with the advances in technology, "anybody can do it."

"You can use another phone as a listening device ... It's just like an extension—that's the concept," he said.

Bacarro said the discovery of the bug had raised more questions apart from who planted it.

He said these questions were: "Who uses the land line now?" and "Was [the bug] placed there to be intentionally discovered?"

Shock, dismay

The Black and White Movement, an opposition group that called for Ms Arroyo's resignation, said it was "shocked and dismayed to learn of the wiretapping of Cory Aquino."

"If she can be tapped, we are all in danger," the group said, adding that those responsible for the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal in 2005 had never been brought to justice.

They were referring to the tapes of alleged tapped phone conversations between Ms Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, wherein the two supposedly talked about plans to rig the 2004 presidential election results in her favor.

Both Ms Arroyo and Garcillano have denied wrongdoing.

The military allegedly did the wiretaps but officials denied this. *Reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Kristine L. Alave, Jeannette I. Andrade, Christine O. Avendaño, Riza T. Olchondra, AP*

IN THE KNOW

What's a bug?

A "BUG" IS A COVERT DEVICE installed in a particular area to intercept conversations and transmit these to a listening post.

A powerful bug allows interested parties to eavesdrop on a conversation being conducted kilometers away.

The most well known type of eavesdropping device is the radio frequency (or RF) bug, which uses a radio transmitter to carry signals. But radio waves emitted by the RF bug are easy to detect using so-called sweeping devices.

Another type is the ultrasonic bug, which converts sound into an audio signal above the range of human hearing. The signal is then intercepted and converted back into recognizable sounds at the listening post.

Yet another type, the expensive optical bug, converts sound into a beam of light or optical pulse, which is later reconverted into sound.

Detecting these bugs can be difficult because some devices are so tiny that they can fit in such commonplace items as pens and even shirt buttons.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Anti-Marcos 'stars' to join indignation rally for Burgos son

From page A1

Freedom Day and pray for Jonas' safety," Edith told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Friends were to hold a candle-light ceremony at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani monument on Edsa and Quezon Avenue in Quezon City later in the evening.

Today, supporters plan to march at 3 p.m. from the corner of Edsa and Pioneer Street in Mandaluyong City to the People Power Monument on Edsa to protest Jonas' abduction on Saturday at the Ever Gotesco Mall on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Family and friends have accused security forces of carrying out the abduction of 36-year-old Jonas, an agriculturist who had been training peasant farmers in organic farming.

Perpetuation of terror

At the observance of World Press Freedom Day at the National Press Club in Manila, Rep. Satur Ocampo said Jonas' kidnapping indicated a "perpetuation of the atmosphere of terror applied on party-list and militant organizations."

Ocampo, a former business editor, said inaction by authorities on the spate of killings of journalists "means they are tolerating, even encouraging the perpetrators of these crimes."

"It is a big black eye on the Philippines that the killers carry on their deeds with impunity," he said. He pointed out that 51 journalists had been killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo became President along with more than 300 militants.

Also present at the occasion was former Sen. Francisco "Kit" Tatad, who presided over the dismantling of the freest press in Asia upon the declaration of martial law in 1972.

During a meeting yesterday, the Commission on Human Rights ordered officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to find Jonas within five days or at the very least, submit an in-depth report of their investigation.

"We know you will be able to locate him, whether he is with the NPA (New People's Army) now or with some (military) intelligence units," said CHR Commissioner Dominador Calamba II during a conference dialogue with the AFP and PNP officials.

"You have all the resources, you have all the personnel to gather information and to do these things ... this will be a blot on your badge if you cannot find Burgos," Calamba said.

CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing also asked the officials to include in their search the two persons who allegedly went missing the same day Jonas was abducted—one Melissa Reyes and another still unidentified man.

The CHR expressed disappointment that Brig. Gen. Delfin Bangit, chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP, and Chief Supt. Geary Barias, head of Task Force Usig, failed to attend the meeting and sent representatives instead.

While the CHR summoned them as "resource persons," Quisumbing stressed the uniformed men's possible responsibility in Burgos' disappearance based on their "track record." She said, "The credibility of the uniformed men has to be brought back."

Not our operation

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. denied any military involvement in Jonas' disappearance. "That's not the kind of operations that we conduct," Esperon told reporters.

He also said the AFP did not get any formal invitation from the CHR to appear at yesterday's dialogue.

"The more prudent thing to do is some police work and intelligence work and we can contribute to that," he said. " I don't think we can contribute to the (solution of the) problem by being called and grilled and appear, and look like suspects."

Stolen license plates

The Quezon City Police District yesterday said it had identified the owner of the license plates on the maroon van used in the abduction of Jonas. QCPD director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula said that the license plate TAB-194 had been issued to a 1990 Isuzu sport utility vehicle in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

The Isuzu was registered to a Mauro Mudlong of San Lorenzo Village in Norzagaray and operatives had been dispatched to talk to Mudlong. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Alcuin Papa and Jeannette I. Andrade*

Esperon 'clueless' why he is being likened to Ver

From page A1

dent Jovito Salonga compared him to the late Gen. Fabian Ver, who occupied the highest post in the military during Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship.

"I did not really get the context of the statement, to compare me to General Ver. I can't get it," Esperon told reporters yesterday.

In a letter on Tuesday, Salonga asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to do something about Esperon who, the ex-Senate president pointed out, had the "lowest trust rating" among her allies and subordinates.

Salonga also said Ver was "a similar figure during the last days of Marcos before Edsa I."

Where's the logic?

Told that the Ver factor was one of the reasons for the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship, Esperon retorted: "If you are saying that I'm the source of gripes in the Armed Forces, you ask the officers and men of the Armed Forces..."

Esperon said he respected and admired Salonga but could not see the logic in the latter's objection to the deployment of troops in Metro Manila.

He said fears of the militarization of the metropolis were unfounded because the troops were deployed in only over 20 barangays."

"There are more than 2,000 barangays [in Metro Manila]. That's not even one percent of the area, and so do you call that militarization?" Esperon said.

The military had initially said the deployment of troops was intended to help impoverished communities through civic action work. Later, however, it admitted that the deployment was part of its campaign against communist rebels who, it said, were engaged in recruiting more forces in the cities.

As though to stress this point, Esperon said that if Salonga was "comparing the situation" then and now and saying that there was "no need" for the military in Metro Manila, "the good senator must remember that when the Liberal Party rally in Plaza Miranda was bombed, their initial reaction was to blame it on security forces.

"But what did it turn out to be? It was the handiwork of the Communist Party of the Philippines," Esperon said.

The AFP chief was referring to the 1971 bombing of the *miting de avance* of the Liberal Party, of which Salonga was a member. Salonga was seriously hurt in Plaza Miranda.

It was widely believed to be the handiwork of Marcos' forces but it was later found out the CPP was behind it.

Salonga was one of those injured in the bomb explosions on the stage set up at Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, Manila.

SC orders Comelec: Name party-list nominees

From page A1

In a unanimous decision reached yesterday following a special en banc session, the high tribunal rebuffed the poll body's attempts to keep the nominees' names under wraps until after the ballots are cast on May 14.

"The court said the nondisclosure by the Comelec is against the right to information enshrined in the Constitution under Section 7, Article 3. Also, Section 28, Article 2 enunciates the policy of full disclosure and transparency in government more so where public interest is involved," Supreme Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez told reporters.

Justices Renato Corona and Alicia Austria-Martinez were on leave during the en banc session. Justice Romeo Callejo retired last week.

Marquez said the decision would be promulgated today after all the justices had signed it, and would then be delivered to the Comelec for compliance.

But he said Chief Justice Reynato Puno had authorized the disclosure of the decision yesterday given the urgency of the issue.

The decision, penned by Associate Justice Cancio Garcia, is immediately executory, and the poll body has to report its compliance to the high court within five days of receiving the directive, according to Marquez.

Marquez also said the Comelec would have to comply with the directive even if it decides to file a motion for reconsideration.

In refusing to disclose the names of the party-list nominees, the Comelec said it was not required to do so because the selection of party-list groups should not be personality-oriented.

It also issued a resolution stating that it would only release the names of the nominees at 3 p.m. on Election Day.

Blind voting

But the high court, in directing the Comelec to release the names of party-list nominees, said the nondisclosure of the names was tantamount to propagating "blind voting."

The tribunal added that the people need to know the nominees so that they could make an informed decision when they choose a party-list group on May 14.

"It has been repeatedly said in various contexts that the people have the right to elect their representatives on the basis of an informed judgment.

"Hence, the need for voters to be informed about matters that have a bearing on their choice. The ideal cannot be achieved in a system of blind voting, as veritably advocated in the assailed resolution of the Comelec," the high court said, according to a statement from its public information office.

The Supreme Court also said there was no national security concern involved in the disclosure of the names of the party-list nominees.

The high court also junked the Comelec's argument that the party-list law, Republic Act No. 7941, did not require it to disclose the names.

The tribunal said the Comelec "misread" the law, pointing out that the prohibition imposed on the poll body extended only to the certified list that is required to be posted in polling places on Election Day.

It also said that to stretch the coverage of the prohibition to the absolute was to read into the law something that was not intended.

"As it were, there is absolutely nothing in RA No. 7941 that prohibits the Comelec from disclosing or even publishing through mediums other than the 'Certified List' the names of the party-list nominees. The Comelec obviously misread the limited nondisclosure aspect of the provision as an absolute bar to public disclosure before the May 2007 elections," the Supreme Court said.

Two petitions

The high court issued the directive to the Comelec in response to the two petitions filed by Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales, Kilosbayan Forum and Bantay Katarungan Foundation, and by the Bantay Republic Act 7941 and Urban Poor for Legal Reforms.

But the high court turned down the plea of Bantay Republic Act 7941 and the Urban Poor for Legal Reforms to disqualify 34 party-list groups for not representing marginalized sectors.

Among the 34 is Biyaheng Langit, which represents tricycle drivers and has for its nominee Dr. Arsenio Abalos, the brother of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

The high court said the issue concerned factual matters that were beyond its ambit.

"The Supreme Court said these are factual issues which the court cannot decide because it could not know if these organizations do not represent the marginalized sectors. It is for the Comelec to decide on this," Marquez said.

The Sanlakas party-list group welcomed the Supreme Court decision, saying the next challenge now to the Comelec is to "swiftly" disqualify from the party-list race Malacañang "fronts."

Judy Ann Miranda, Partido ng Manggagawa nominee, praised the high court for backing the people's right to know the nominees of the party-list group they would be voting for.

The Gabriela Women's Party yesterday asked the Comelec to disqualify four party-list groups it claimed were "Malacañang fronts."

In its petition, Gabriela said that Agbiag! Timpuyog Ilocano (Agbiag), Babae Para sa Kaunlaran (Babae Ka), the League of Youth for Peace and Development (Lypad) and the Kalahi-Advocates for Overseas Filipinos (Kkalahi) "were not created to represent the interest of marginalized and/or underrepresented sectors but the political interest and ambition of those already in power."

The four groups were mentioned in an alleged two-page memorandum to President Macapagal-Arroyo dated Oct. 16, 2006, seeking funds from the government. The memo was said to have been signed by Malacañang's Office of External Affairs chief, Assistant Secretary Marcelo Fariñas II.

Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza, one of the complainants, said the petition was "a way of digging deeper into the existence of a counter-plan to frustrate the Left and opposition from gaining additional seats in Congress through the party-list elections."

Protective policy on sugar hurting food processing

By Ronnel W. Domingo

DOMESTIC INDUSTRIES FIND themselves at odds with a long-standing trade policy on sugar as protective measures favoring suppliers stunt the growth of food processors largely dependent on the commodity and derail their attempts to expand exports.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation (Philexport), says his group has been campaigning for decades against such protection of the sugar industry.

Philexport members include the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization and the Philippine Chamber of Food Manufacturers, which in turn represent small-, medium- and large-sized food firms, including market leaders.

"Domestic companies that use sugar as input have been on this since the 1970s and even earlier," Ortiz-Luis says. "So far, these industries have not been able to effectively counter [the strong influence] of the sugar firms."

He says food and beverage processors find it hard to bring in supplies from abroad because of the high tariffs and prohibitive customs rules.

As of 2006, the lowest tariff on sugar was 38 percent, but this rate was reached through gradual decreases effected from the level of 70 percent imposed under Presidential Decree No. 34 of 1973.

Quota system

Under Executive Order No. 313 of 1996, companies that import sugar paid as much as 100 percent of value, especially if the shipments were off-quota, or exceeding the allowed volume.

Further, Ortiz-Luis says domestic sugar is priced higher than the international market rate, if it is at all available for purchase.

"The sugar millers have agreed to give sugar users relief by agreeing, through the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), to sell supplies at competitive prices," Ortiz-Luis says. "Still, volume is limited with yearly quotas that are changed regularly."

He is referring to the market quota system, under which locally produced sugar is classified into five categories based on market destination—"A" for the US import quota market; "B" for the domestic market; C" for reserve; "D" for exports to countries other than the United States; and "E" which may be bought at the world price by exporting firms using sugar as input.

In 1992, the SRA created another quota category, B1, which is also for the domestic market but may be withdrawn from storage only after 120 days.

A study made by The Asia Foundation and released in 1999—which industry experts say still describes the current situation—explains that the market allocation system ensures the domestic supply of sugar when the world price is greater than the domestic price; when US prices are high (causing domestic sugar producers to favor export); or when the foreign exchange rate is "uncooperative" (the peso depreciates against the dollar so imports cost more).

Demand exceeds supply

The study says this market allocation system is practiced worldwide, citing interviews with industry sources.

Also, while importation of refined sugar was liberalized starting in 1982 amid an oversupply and depressed world prices, the study says "the SRA continues to exercise regulatory powers over sugar importation, affecting its entry and practically isolating the domestic market from imports."

The SRA's regulatory powers include monitoring of sugar imports, imposing of monitoring fees, and prescribing administrative procedures if the imported sugar is not used in food processing.

Food processors' production requirements are the main cause domestic demand for sugar usually exceeds local supply.

Refined sugar is a main ingredient in chocolate and chocolate products, which on average contain up to 50 percent sugar while other sugar and chocolate confectioneries contain an average of some 75 percent sugar.

Practices discourage growth

Data from the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization Inc. (Philfoodex) show the amount of sugar used in various food products made by its members—citrus fruit juices, 25-70 percent; confectioneries, 80-90 percent; preserved fruits, 30-65 percent; candied fruits, 65-70 percent; ready-to-drink juices, 10 percent; beverages, 80-90 percent; and sauces, 30-35 percent.

Considering such demand for sugar and the concurrent difficulty and high cost of securing supplies, the current trade practices simply do not encourage growth of the country's processed food industry, according to Ortiz-Luis.

Life once 'sweeter' at Hacienda Luisita

By Russell Arador
Inquirer Central Luzon

HACIENDA LUISITA, TARLAC City—Fernando Salvador was only 12 years old when he started working at the vast sugarcane plantation then owned by the Spanish firm Compania General de Tabacos de Filipinas, or Tabacalera.

"Life used to be better then," says Salvador, now 74. There was plenty of work to do.

This continued even after the Spanish owners, fearing a communist Huk uprising, sold the 6,453-hectare hacienda and a sugar mill, Central Azucarera de Tarlac, in 1958 to the Tarlac Development Corp. (Tadeco) of Jose Cojuangco Sr.

The acquisition of Cojuangco, whose daughter Corazon later became the Philippine president, comprised three municipalities in Tarlac province.

The purchase was made possible through loans from the Government Service Insurance System and the Manufacturer's Trust of New York, the latter guaranteed by the Central Bank of the Philippines.

Bygone era

Norberto Masanque, 57, and Marcelina de Leon, 74, both old hands at Hacienda Luisita, share Salvador's recollection of a bygone era.

"In those times, there were a lot of opportunities for work. There was even so much overtime work that we sometimes got fed up working," Masanque says.

Often, he says, hacienda management would offer Sunday work but workers would refuse. Back then, Luisita workers could afford the luxury of refusing work.

Not any more.

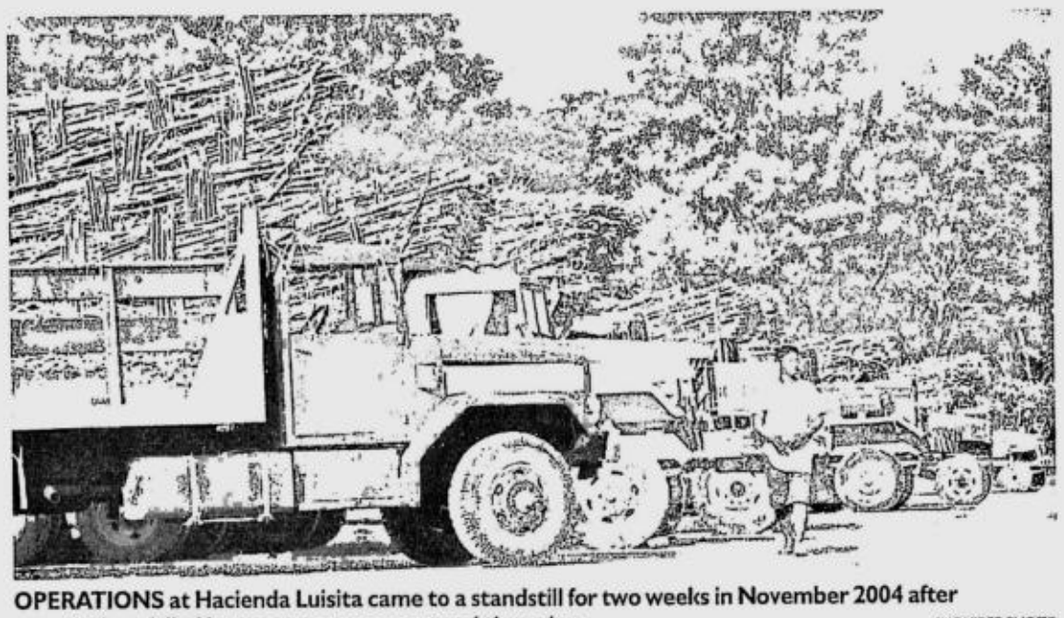
Two years after Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino became the President after the 1986 People Power Revolution, she signed into law a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), calling for the redistribution of private agricultural lands across the nation.

The Cojuangco family, however, held on to its landholding under a stock distribution option allowed under CARP, in which farmers at the hacienda were given shares of stock in the Luisita corporation in lieu of land. The shares made them co-owners of the hacienda, at least on paper.

Retrenchment

On Aug. 30, 2004, about 1,000 Hacienda Luisita workers staged a rally to protest what they described as the arbitrary retrenchment of workers, including United Luisita Workers' Union (ULWU) president Rene Galang and nine other officers, among many other issues.

On Nov. 16, 2004, seven people were killed when policemen and government soldiers dismantled barricades set up by the protesters.



OPERATIONS at Hacienda Luisita came to a standstill for two weeks in November 2004 after negotiations failed between management and the union. INQUIRER PHOTO

The conflict reached the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council, which subsequently decided to revoke the SDO arrangement and distribute the hacienda to the farmers. The case is now in the Supreme Court.

Masanque recalls that work had started to become scarce shortly after the implementation of the SDO scheme. "Work was divided among us. Sometimes one could work for only three days within a week. I sometimes got work four days a week," he says.

Toward the 2004 strike, which would paralyze operations not only at the plantation but at the mill as well, workers would get only a day of work a week.

Reducing 'service stocks'

Masanque says he suspected that management was deliberately cutting workers' "mandays"—the number of days that each beneficiary works—to reduce their "service stocks," which is computed on the number of days worked.

He says he was able to buy television and stereo sets and had his house built when work was still abundant. Now he could not even have his broken TV repaired.

Aside from diminishing work opportunities, another adverse result of the SDO implementation was the loss of educational and hospitalization benefits that workers used to get, Masanque says.

"Before, we enjoyed a lot of benefits. We did not pay for hospital bills. We do that now," he says.

Masanque cites as example his confinement at the Far Eastern University Hospital in Metro Manila in 1983.

He says the company paid for his bills amounting to P92,000. "I did not pay, not even a centavo," he says.

Before, workers could send their children to school for free and could even avail of educational loans for other expenses twice a year, Masanque says. "There was even a free school bus service."

Salvador says the culprits for the dwindling man-days were the farm machines that gradually took over a number of processes used to be handled by people in a bid to lower the cost of sugar production.

"When the machines came, opportunities for work gradually dwindled," says Salvador, who, like Masanque and De Leon, managed to build his house when the pasture was greener at the hacienda.

Nostalgic for Ninoy

All three found Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino's stint as hacienda administrator as most beneficial to Luisita workers.

Such was their esteem for the assassinated opposition leader and husband of Corazon Aquino. They felt that had Ninoy been alive during his wife's presidency, he would have compelled her to parcel out the hacienda to its farmers.

After all, regardless of the roots of the Luisita workers' ills, a collective longing for actual land ownership endures, the workers say.

De Leon, who started working as a sugarcane cutter and weeder at the hacienda at 20, adds: "We prefer that the land is distributed because people could till it."

GMA vowed to distribute Mike A's sugar lands

From page A1

(SDO) that the Presidential Commission on Agrarian Reform revoked last year.

The commission cited a body of evidence showing that the deal had not led to a substantial improvement in the lives of farmer-beneficiaries, the essence of agrarian reform. The issue is now pending in the Supreme Court.

Loopholes

Critics say the Arroyo family also used loopholes in the CARP law to hold on to an estimated half of its original 1,000 ha of a sugar hacienda by parceling cane fields into small family-sized farms that were then given or sold to individuals or several dozen ghost companies, or forming cooperatives of loyal farmers and pitting them against a very small group of pro-CARP workers. Some of those pieces of land offered for distribution to the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) had defective titles and thus could not be conveyed.

In a later move, Negros Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, the President's brother-in-law, sought to reclassify his plantation from agricultural to industrial to keep the DAR away from his property and go into the production of ethanol—a far more lucrative enterprise in the face of rising oil prices and the popularity of environment-friendly biofuels.

Owners of some 600,000 ha of agricultural lands, mostly on Negros island, have followed the Arroyo example of holding on to vast tracts of land, say administration critics, hoping that if their plantations were not subjected to redistribution by the time CARP expires in June 2008, they could keep their estates forever.

All these developments underscore the difficulty of pursuing a meaningful agrarian reform program that Philippine presidents since the US Commonwealth era had promised to pursue to alleviate poverty, remove unrest in the countryside and spur agricultural development.

Independent studies conducted by foreign donors, nongoverment organizations and academics have shown that in areas where farm owners had redistributed lands to tillers and with appropriate financial and technical support, the beneficiaries had improved crop yields and, more importantly, transformed their lives and made them self-reliant.

Positive impact

"The reform has made a positive impact on the rural society," says a yearlong study conducted by the respected German Technical Agency GTZ and the DAR.

"It has improved the well-being of the rural population and contributed to socioeconomic stability in the countryside," says the study released in April 2006.

On the other hand, there has been no showing in these studies that corporate schemes have benefited farm workers, other than leaders of farm groups organized by the landowners to keep them in control of haciendas that they were on paper giving away to comply with the CARP law.

In fact, the GTZ study has called for a review of the stock distribution option because of the Hacienda Luisita experience and the noncompliance by 13 other big landowners who had availed themselves of the corporate loophole.

"Among the complaints of dissatisfied ARBs (agrarian reform beneficiaries) is the failure of the corporate landowners to grant some of the expected benefits that are due," the study says.

No to farmers' takeover

Christian Monsod, a pro-bono lawyer for agrarian reform activists, recalls that in 1988 when the CARP was being debated, he had proposed a corporate approach to agrarian reform on condition that farmers would get control of the firm at the rate of 3 percent per year. He figured that in 17 years, the farmer would gain 51 percent of the corporation.

But Monsod, former chair of the Commission on Elections and member of the commission that drafted the 1987 Constitution, says the Aquino administration turned down the proposal.

"If they had accepted that, by 2005 or 2006, all these corporations would be in the hands of the farmers. What happens now is that you have corporations forever under control of the landowners, which defeats the purpose of asset reform. Social justice is asset reform," he says.

At the Philippine Development Forum in Cebu on March 8-9, diplomats and potential donors urged President Arroyo to spell out her plans for CARP before it expires next year so that Congress could act on them. A climate of uncertainty has meanwhile descended, affecting a whole range of decisions, for example, on investments, infrastructure development and access to foreign funding.

Aid deals suspended

The National Economic Development Authority on March 14 issued a memo to the DAR and the Department of Budget and Management to suspend initiatives seeking to secure international financial aid for CARP while no firm policy decisions have been made on its extension, according to a copy of the document secured by the INQUIRER last week.

The memo threw a spanner in efforts, among others, to secure a $105-million loan package being negotiated by the DAR with the Asian Development Bank and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to finance farming activities of agrarian reform beneficiaries, according to a senior government official who requested anonymity.

That would derail other financial support projects in the pipeline, including loans from Japan and the World Bank.

"We don't know why this is happening, but good things should not be stopped," says the official.

5-year extension

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman told INQUIRER reporters that DAR had distributed roughly 3.8 million ha of private agricultural lands. An estimated 1.3 million ha remained to be parceled out—the bulk of which are sugar plantations. (More than 4 million ha of public lands have also been distributed.)

"We need more time to cover these areas. We have to improve our support services. We can't leave our farmer-beneficiaries after 2008. We really have to sustain the productivity of the land we have distributed," Pangandaman says.

He says funding is a major problem. Over the past decade, DAR has spent more than P119 billion for CARP—the money coming from the sale of "nonperforming government assets" and recovery of stolen wealth amassed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies.

The INQUIRER has learned that DAR technocrats are putting together a proposal to extend land acquisition and distribution for another five years. They are hoping that by then, all the lands that have not been covered would have been bought and subdivided.

In addition, the technocrats are also proposing that payments made by beneficiaries for lands they have acquired be scrapped altogether and titles to them be issued so that farmers could use the money to fund their farming activities and secure mortgages on their properties, something they cannot do now.

Under the current practice, farmer beneficiaries amortize the land they have acquired up to 10 percent of their crop yield per annum.

Pangandaman skates a question on whether he thought he would be able to put under CARP the more than 600,000 ha of farms that have not been covered in the past two decades that the program was in force.

Strong resistance

Pangandaman concedes the difficulty of subdividing haciendas.

"We're at the tail end of our program. Most of these areas are the so-called contentious land areas where there's strong resistance of landowners and there are several pending cases filed. These are the tough landholdings we are covering and part of this is the Velez-Malaga," he says.

He is referring to the 455-ha property of Roberto Cuenca that has been under public spotlight after 22 of his workers staged a hunger strike to press their demands for agrarian reform.

Sugar has always been a protected industry since the American colonial rule, when it enjoyed quotas in the lucrative US market. When world prices fell in the 1970s and 1980s, the industry managed to secure high tariffs for sugar that have continued to this day, to the detriment of other food processors. *(See related story this page)*. Sugar producers enjoy not only credits but also support services—thanks to Negros representatives in Congress.

Influence-peddling

Arsenio Balisacan, a director of the 11-nation Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, isn't sanguine about the future of agrarian reform in the Philippines.

"If we did not do it well during the martial law regime, what makes us believe that we can do it well now under a democracy," Balisacan says.

"The avenues for influence-peddling is even more open than it used to be. I am a little concerned and I am not optimistic when it comes to prospects of dramatically reducing the inequity in distribution of land," he says.

"We are protecting a very small sector at the expense of millions of poor farmers and Filipinos. We should have graduated to high-value products."

In Thailand, sugar producers are small but they are among the most efficient in the world, Balisacan says.

Peasant access is key

"Leveling the playing field should have been the first order of the day when dictatorship is not the rule of the game but market forces," Balisacan says.

Peasant access to land is the key. Unless this is done, he says Filipinos will remain impoverished.

"If you come from a poor household, it is likely this poverty will be transmitted to the children and grandchildren. You can't give them better education, health care. It's a poverty trap," Balisacan says. *With reports from TJ Burgonio, Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

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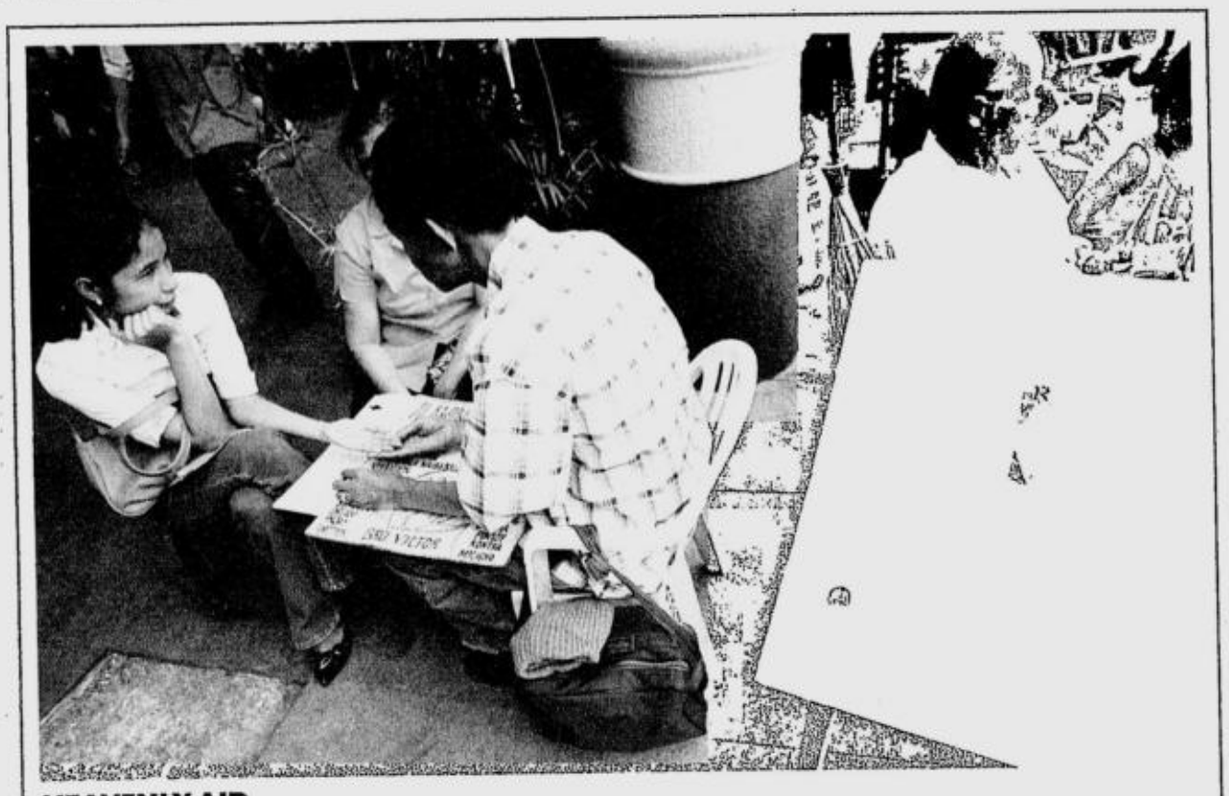

HEAVENLY AID
A fortune teller reads the palm of a customer for a small fee in front of a church in Manila. REUTERS

Rifles designed as high-powered firearms seized

'Gun store owner had no permit'

By Nancy C. Carvajal

POLICE RAIDED YESTERDAY MORNING A house in Caloocan City and confiscated thousands of pesos worth of airsoft rifles designed like high-powered firearms.

The owner, Alvin Estrella, 25, of no. 138 Ma. Clara St. corner 7th Ave., Grace Park, Caloocan City, was arrested.

Supt. Reynaldo Orante, chief of the Northern Police District Intelligence Unit, said the raid yielded at least 18 airsoft rifles and pistols.

"The rifles were worth thousands of pesos and could really pass off as real guns," Orante said.

He said the confiscated air guns were designed as M-16 armalite rifle, M-15 armalite rifle, Ak-47 rifle, Steyr rifle, classic carbine, G36 rifle, .45 caliber pistol and 9mm pistol. Also confiscated from the store were Kevlar helmets, two tactical vests and other accessories.

Orante said a M-16 model "armalite rifle" was offered by Estrella to an undercover agent for P18,000. He said the store was under surveillance after the police received reports from residents of alleged gun trafficking in the area.

According to chair Jesus Palomata of Barangay 111 Zone 10, the imitation firearms alarmed residents of the community.

"Men in luxury cars were seen going to the store and leaving with what appeared to be real firearms," the barangay official said.

Orante added that sale transactions, usually in the middle of the night, were also reported.

Although air soft rifles are legal, Orante said Estrella failed to show any documents covering his operation. "He was not able to show his license to sell, repair and display air soft rifles," Orante said.

The police officer disclosed that toy guns resembling real ones in size and color had proliferated of late and could be used by private armed groups in the coming elections.

He said a man with a M-16 imitation airsoft rifle was arrested in Malabon City last week. The nozzle of what seemed to be a M-16 armalite airsoft rifle protruded from his bag causing panic among other commuters, Orante said.

The suspect, identified as Ricardo Guillen, surrendered the air gun and pointed to Estrella as the source of the rifle.

Orante said charges against Estrella were yet to be determined pending further investigation. "We are looking into the identities of Estrella's buyers," Orante said.

Borgy mauling case gets new twist

By Julie M. Aurelio

IN A NEW TWIST TO THE INCIDENT involving the alleged mauling of a 22-year-old student by commercial model Borgy Manotoc, police yesterday said the latter may have even tried to break up the mob that beat up Carlo Brown on the dawn of April 10.

Chief Insp. Celso Rodriguez said some witnesses saw Manotoc trying to pacify friends who were beating up Brown after a heated argument. "Some witnesses said they saw Borgy trying to break up the fight," Rodriguez told the INQUIRER. The witnesses, Ruben Deriada and Arnel Talugdan, are employees of the Embassy bar in Taguig City near the site of the incident.

Brown was allegedly beaten up by Manotoc at The Fort in the city, after the victim tried to talk to Manotoc's girlfriend, Ornusa Cadness. Brown had cuts on the back of his head and was confined at the Makati Medical Center for several days.

At the site, Brown reiterated to police his version of the brawl. But Rodriguez said Brown's narration yesterday had no legal bearing on the case because charges had not been filed against Manotoc. "We're here to allow the request of the victim's family for a reenactment," said Rodriguez, chief of the Taguig investigation unit.

Police said other witnesses claimed seeing Brown hit a glass panel near Embassy a few minutes after being accosted by Manotoc's companions. PO1 Melvin Garcia, case investigator, said they discovered a shattered glass panel near the establishment.

Garcia said Brown's hand wounds may have been also caused by broken glass. But Brown's mother, Mara Pardo de Tavera, does not agree. "Look at my son's hands. Do you see any cuts made by glass? You have witnesses, but physical evidence is stronger than witnesses," she said.

₱8M lost as 2 fires hit Cainta

SOME P3 MILLION WORTH OF PROPERTY was damaged and about 95 families lost their homes after a fire broke out early yesterday morning in Cainta, Rizal.

No one was reported injured in the incident that destroyed some 50 houses.

On Tuesday afternoon, some P5 million worth of property was destroyed in a fire that gutted a factory on Irma Street, Marik Subdivision also in Cainta.

The blaze yesterday reportedly started at around 2 a.m. in the house of Sheila and Diego Mahusay at Block 11, Brgy. San Andres. The house had no electricity so fire investigators suspected a candle could have started the blaze. About 20 fire trucks responded to the level three alarm. The fire was finally put out at around 4 a.m.

The fire department said the fire quickly spread because most of the houses were made of light materials. Narrow streets and spectators also made it difficult for firefighters to reach the burning houses immediately.

Joseph John Raymundo

Assets seizure could hurt City Hall–Binay

By DJ Yap

THE SEIZURE OF MAKATI CITY'S assets by the Bureau of Internal Revenue to recover P1.1 billion in alleged unpaid taxes could cripple operations at City Hall.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said yesterday utility bills would not be paid along with salaries of city employees, and basic or social services would not be met while the garnishment order is in effect. "In short, the national government is shutting us down," he said.

"We're supposed to release the midterm benefits we promised our workers today. But now, we have to tell them that we don't have the money," Binay added.

On Wednesday, the BIR ordered 34 major banks to freeze the city government's assets, as well as Binay's personal funds.

At a press conference at the City Hall with Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado yesterday, Binay questioned the serving of the garnishment order to private banks, instead of just the four government banks where the city's assets were deposited.

"In the Philippine Veterans Bank alone, we have enough funds to cover the P1.1 billion (in unpaid taxes), so why did they serve the notice of garnishment to all banks?" Mercado asked.

"Isn't this a clear case of political harassment?" Binay said.

But BIR revenue officer Roberto Baquiran, who signed the garnishment notices, said the "blanket" service was standard operating procedure, since they had no way of determining the amount deposited in each bank account. "Once we get confirmation that the P1.1 billion has been secured then, within one minute, I can order the withdrawal of the notices of garnishment," he told the INQUIRER.

The BIR alleged the city government failed to remit a total of P1,150,331,321.81 in withholding taxes of about 8,000 employees from 1999 to 2002.

On March 9, BIR chief of the withholding tax division Marivic Galban wrote a demand letter addressed to Binay, the city treasurer and the city accountant, asking the city government to pay its alleged tax liabilities. Galban gave Binay until March 31 to avail of a special "one-time administrative abatement program."

Binay said the issuance of the garnishment notices was irregular since BIR Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 24-2007 gave all taxpayers until June 30 to avail of the amnesty. The mayor said he would do everything necessary to regain control of Makati's assets.

Binay, president of the United Opposition, reiterated his accusation that the BIR was acting on orders of his political enemies.

He said his political rivals knew of the BIR case several days in advance as shown by its publication in Tanod, a periodical.

Binay alleged that Tanod is run by the Genuinos. Erwin Genuino, son of Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. Chair Efraim Genuino, is running against Binay's daughter Abigail for representative of the city's district 2. Another Genuino son, Ton, is running for councilor.

METROBRIEFS

Cops to guard poll centers

FIVE policemen will be deployed to guard polling centers in Metro Manila for the May 14 elections, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said yesterday. The NCRPO said a total of 2,727 policemen will be deployed a few days before the elections. They will be augmented by 198 members of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) 2007 class, 448 police trainees and 150 members of the Regional Special Action Unit (RSAU). They will be guarding 725 polling centers around the city that will accept 5.5 million registered voters on election day. Earlier, the NCRPO said they would keep an eye on the cities of Pasig, Pasay and Caloocan as possible flashpoints of violent incidents related to the coming elections. PNP National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Deputy Director General Reynaldo Varilla had said intense political rivalry in these cities prompted them to monitor the situation in these areas.

Alcuin Papa

Hot meat confiscated in QC market

MORE than 3,000 kilos, or about three tons of hot meat were confiscated by Task Force Bantay of the National Meat Inspection Service at the MC Market in Balintawak, Quezon City, yesterday morning. Dr. Fernando N. Lontoc, head of the NMIS accreditation, registration and enforcement division told the INQUIRER that the meat seized was believed to have come from Region 3 and was worth around P200,000. The confiscated meat did not have proper certification as required by the NMIS.

Amy R. Remo

Osmundo Umali; 77

FORMER Bureau of Internal Revenue Regional Director Osmundo "Munding" G. Umali died last April 15 in New York City at the age of 77. His ashes will be brought to Christ the King Church in Green Meadows on May 7 the following day. The ashes will be entombed at the Bacoor Memorial Park on May 8 after Mass. He is survived by his wife Aurora Simpao Umali, daughter Maria Arvida Umali, and sons Jose Pericles Umali and Edmund Victor Umali.

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(PDI–May 4, 2007)

Belmonte running virtually unopposed in Quezon City

By Margaux C. Ortiz

WITH THE ELECTIONS JUST two weeks away, Quezon City Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte Jr.'s political rivals are unknown to many city residents.

Other mayoral candidates appear to have filed their certificates of candidacy quietly. People have yet to hear their campaign jingles and see their posters.

ELEKSYON 2007

"I know Mayor Belmonte has several rivals for the post, but we don't know their names," Jun Flores, a coconut vendor, told the INQUIRER.

The incumbent mayor is facing three candidates. Romeo Acebedo, 61, of Project 7, Quezon City, filed his certificate of candidacy in January. He described himself as jobless in his certificate of candidacy.

Florian Yani Alvarez, 66, of Holy Spirit, Quezon City, reportedly a former actor, also filed his candidacy early. The third candidate, Andy Rosales, 43, described himself as a "social engineer."

For some voters, it was not the anonymity of Belmonte's rivals that would make them vote for the incumbent.

"Mayor Belmonte was able to deliver quality programs in the city," Edgardo Eleria, an engineer who has lived in QC for almost 25 years, said.

"It was only Mayor Belmonte who was able to solve the traffic problem through road widening projects, designating spots for sidewalk vendors, and instilling discipline among pedestrians," said Rene Basa, a Novaliches resident for over 50 years. He also mentioned beautification projects, proper garbage collection and the construction of plazas.

But one government agency employee, who voted for former Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. in the 2004 elections, said he would vote for Belmonte's rival if there was one. "It is time somebody else governs the city," he said.

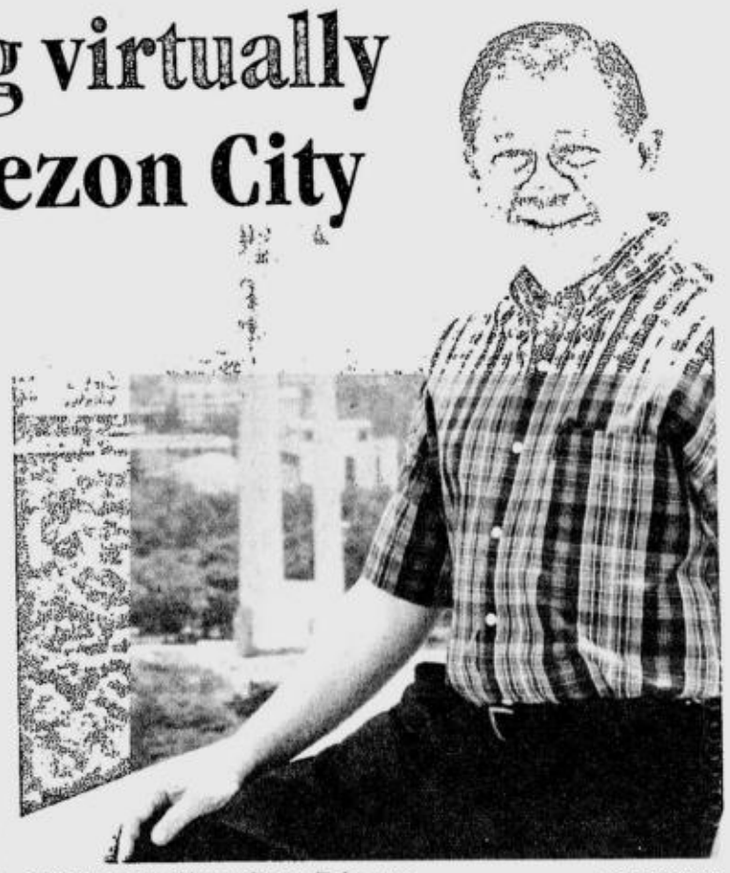
Another staunch Mathay supporter admitted Belmonte did well in her barangay in the city's fourth district. "Belmonte is popular because he gives whatever the barangay asks for," said the resident of Barangay Roxas who declined to be named.

Belmonte said he was baffled by his popularity among city residents from all walks of life.

"But I learned that the A-B residents perceive me as a good manager and administrator while the D-E find hope in my strongly apolitical approach," Belmonte told the INQUIRER in an interview.

The mayor said his track record could explain his popularity. During his first three years in office, he transformed the cash-strapped local government to one of the most financially stable cities in the country.

Belmonte said that during his second term, he embarked on a massive infrastructure development program, including the construction of new roads and school buildings. *With Verity Ayrah B. Cabigao*



QUEZON City Mayor Sonny Belmonte EDWIN BACASMAS

Nene Aguilar back on campaign trail in Las Piñas

VERGEL "NENE" AGUILAR, WHO is running for mayor in Las Piñas City, assured residents of Barangay CAA-BF Int'l, the largest barangay in the city, of continuous educational assistance to their children, with the construction of a three-story high school building in the area.

The move is aimed to accommodate more students and provide them secondary level education for free.

Aguilar, who has been mayor of the city in the past, said the construction of 12-classroom school building for high school students is in addition to the Las Piñas National High School CAA-Annex along F. Aguilar Ave., and three other high schools in the city.

The construction of the new building will complement an elementary school in the area, Aguilar, who is running unopposed, said. The building is one of several infrastructure projects for the year in compliance with the city government's commitment of continued progress and unhampered delivery of basic services. "I will not allow the momentum of growth and progress in Las Piñas be obstructed for any reason," Aguilar said.

He also cited the giant leap in business, social progress and environmental care as proofs of the city's development over the years.

These are being enjoyed through renovated health and day care centers, and expanding the coverage of free hospitalization program, among others, he said.

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Major powers warn Iran of 3rd round of sanctions

LONDON—WORLD POWERS WARNED Iran on Wednesday a third round of UN sanctions loomed if it did not halt its uranium enrichment work, which the West suspects could be used to build nuclear weapons.

Earlier, Iran underlined its determination to press on with the work when Ali Akbar Velayati, international affairs adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Tehran was capable of mass producing machines used for enriching uranium.

"One day Iran had problems to produce one centrifuge but right now we have obtained the technology for mass production of centrifuges," Velayati told the Jomohouri Eslami newspaper.

It was believed to be the first time a senior aide of Khamenei, who has the final say on nuclear and other policies, has said it could make centrifuges on a large scale.

The sanctions warning followed a meeting in London of senior officials from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia—plus Germany.

A British Foreign Office statement said the political directors from the six major powers had concluded a negotiated solution was still preferable but that further action would be taken if necessary to get Iran to comply.

"There was strong agreement on the way ahead, reflecting our shared concerns about Iran's non-compliance with (the UN nuclear watchdog) and Security Council requirements and our common interest in a negotiated solution," said the statement.

"All agreed that if Iran failed to meet international requirements the Security Council would need to take further action," it said.

Iran says its nuclear program is only for electricity so it can export more of its oil and gas.

The United Nations has already imposed two sets of sanctions on the Islamic Republic since December over its refusal to halt uranium enrichment, which can be used to fuel power stations or make bombs.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, while suggesting his country in general favored negotiations, said Tehran would not retreat "one iota" from what it saw as its right to develop a civilian nuclear energy industry.

"The world should know that … Iran is among those countries who have the industrial (nuclear) fuel cycle," he told a cheering crowd in the central province of Kerman.

Iran said last month it could make nuclear fuel on an industrial scale, a move that would take it closer to developing atomic weapons if it wanted to. Western experts expressed doubt about the announcement.

Tehran aims to have 3,000 centrifuges running at its main enrichment plant Natanz by the end of this month. That could be enough to refine uranium for one bomb within a year.

Centrifuges, tubular devices that are tricky to calibrate, spin at supersonic speed to refine fuel for power plants or, if it is enriched to high levels, nuclear explosives.

Diplomats and analysts say Iran has not shown the ability to run centrifuges for long periods without breakdown, the key to producing nuclear fuel, and say it is at least 3-8 years away from making enough enriched uranium for a bomb, if it wants one.

In London, the major powers reiterated strong support for continued dialogue between EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani.

The major powers were "trying quite intently to open up a channel on the nuclear issue" through Solana, who was expected to meet Larijani again next week, US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns said on Wednesday. *Reuters*

WANNA BUY A HAT?
Comedian Stan Laurel, half of the 1930s slapstick double act Laurel and Hardy, holds his trademark bowler hat. The hat is to be auctioned in New York later this month, Christie's auction house said on May 2. AFP

Kent State tape said to replay order to fire

KENT, OHIO—AN AUDIO RECORDING OF the shootings 37 years ago at Kent State University includes the voices of Ohio National Guard leaders ordering troops to fire into a crowd of students, according to a man wounded in the shootings, who obtained a copy of the recording.

If confirmed as authentic, the recording could solve the mystery of the shootings on May 4, 1970, which became a defining moment in the protests against the Vietnam War.

Alan Canfora, who was shot in the right wrist, played a copy of the recording at a news conference here on Tuesday.

Through grainy static and the high-pitched calls of protesters, it was possible to faintly hear someone shout "Point!" Canfora said the full command is recorded on the tape, with multiple voices shouting "Right here!" "Get Set! Point!" and "Fire!" Those words, however, were difficult to discern when he played the recording. A 13-second volley of gunfire follows, during which four students were killed and nine were wounded.

"The evidence speaks for itself," Canfora said. "The voices are right there, very clear. There was an order to fire."

The President's Commission on Campus Unrest, which published its final report on the shootings in October 1970, never addressed whether commanders ordered troops to fire. Based on the newly available recording, Canfora said he would call on Congress, the Justice Department and Ohio's attorney general to open new investigations. *NYT*

WORLDBRIEFS

Chavez takes over foreign-controlled oil projects

SAN FELIPE, VENEZUELA—President Hugo Chavez seized control of the last remaining oil projects in Venezuela controlled by large US and European energy companies on Tuesday. The move to take over the projects, announced in January, is the centerpiece of recent actions aimed at consolidating his government's control over the economy. Venezuela's control over the oil-production projects, which are in the Orinoco region in the country's interior and worth an estimated $30 billion, will weaken companies like Exxon Mobil, Chevron and ConocoPhillips in one of the world's most promising oil exploration regions. Venezuela is allowing the private companies to remain as minority partners, but the companies are far from agreements on compensation for the loss of their assets. *NYT*

Tempers fray in French presidential debate

PARIS—Right-winger Nicolas Sarkozy and socialist rival Segolene Royal staged an often bad tempered televised debate Wednesday that could have a crucial effect on France's presidential vote. Facing each other across a table, Royal, who trails her rival in opinion polls ahead of Sunday's runoff vote, launched a volley of attacks on Sarkozy's record in government and their disagreements repeatedly flared into ill-restrained hostility. An estimated 20 million viewers were engrossed by the two and half hours of exchanges on the reasons and cures for France's economic and social problems. But analysts said neither could claim victory. In the most fiery outburst, Royal charged Sarkozy with "political immorality" after he said that handicapped children should be guaranteed a place in ordinary schools. *AFP*

Turkey headed for snap polls in July

ANKARA—A Turkish parliamentary committee Wednesday set July 22 as the date for snap general elections after Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for polls to end a simmering crisis over a disputed presidential vote. The government bowed to opposition calls for early polls a day after the Constitutional Court annulled a first-round parliamentary vote for a new president, in which Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul was the sole candidate last Friday. The AKP effort to elect a former Islamist to the presidency led to a tense standoff between the government and the staunchly secularist military in the worst political crisis Erdogan has faced since taking office in March 2003. *AFP*

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Olmert faces street protests, angry solons

JERUSALEM—AFTER FACING DOWN A MUTINY from his own party over a scathing Lebanon war report, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert faced a new battle on Thursday with street protests and angry lawmakers.

Opposition leaders in parliament were expected to demand that the prime minister step down during an extraordinary session to discuss the interim government inquiry that blasted Olmert for serious failure in the 34-day war.

Late Thursday, thousands were expected to echo the calls at a rally in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square at the first mass public protest after the publication of the damning report.

"This demonstration is an occasion for people to show a red card to Ehud Olmert and (Defense Minister) Amir Peretz and tell them that they should step down," reserve Gen. Uzi Dayan, an organizer of the protest, told army radio. (Red card in soccer means ejection—ed.)

OLMERT AP

Olmert has resisted enormous pressure to step down after the release of the report on Monday, saying it would be irresponsible, and has vowed that his government would work to correct the mistakes uncovered by the inquiry.

On Tuesday the beleaguered premier put a lid on a rebellion within his Kadima party despite a call to quit by top aide Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and the resignation of the chief of the party's parliamentary bloc.

"The prospect of a putsch within Kadima's ranks has burst like a soap bubble, along with the fear of a ministerial mass desertion that could topple Olmert's government," wrote the liberal Haaretz newspaper.

Following a late-night meeting of Kadima's 29 deputies in the 120-seat Knesset, Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres emerged saying Olmert had received "unprecedented support" from the MPs. Only two MPs supported Livni's call for Olmert to step down.

"He may be a failed prime minister, but he is a fairly good politician," wrote the tabloid Maariv.

"The most criticized man in the State of Israel succeeded, at least for now, to stabilize his party and coalition and head off—with relative ease—the mutiny that never was," wrote the mass-selling Yediot Aharonot.

Livni failed to rally support within Kadima by not backing her call for Olmert to step down with her own resignation, observers said.

"She could have established herself yesterday," wrote Maariv. "Instead she sold out. Big time."

Although the opposition can try and push through a no-confidence vote in Olmert's government at its session on Thursday, the measure is unlikely to pass as the premier still enjoys the support of his 78-member coalition in the Knesset. *AFP*

50 countries in bid to rescue Iraq

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, EGYPT—A conference aimed at rescuing Iraq from chaos and bankruptcy kicked off Thursday in Egypt amid an unprecedented display of international unity.

Foreign ministers and top diplomats from more than 50 countries gathered in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh to launch a five-year plan aimed at stabilizing war-torn Iraq.

Participants were on Thursday expected to adopt the International Compact with Iraq (ICI), a five-year plan to stabilize the war-torn country and develop its moribund economy.

In his opening remarks, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said he hoped the conference "will herald a new level in Iraq's relations with the world's nations."

He voiced his hope the meeting would yield significant progress on both the economic and security fronts.

Iraq's Finance Minister Bayan Jabr Solagh told AFP before the conference kicked off he expected countries including Saudi Arabia and Egypt to write off about $40-50 billion of debt at the meeting.

Iraqi officials also said they hoped the conference would see their neighbors offer a strong commitment to stabilizing their country, plagued by a bloody anti-American insurgency and relentless communal bloodletting.

Heading to Egypt, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the onus was on Iraq's neighbors to show their commitment to ending violence, warning that their own stability was at stake.

"The most important message that I will be delivering is that a stable, unified and democratic Iraq is an Iraq that will be a pillar of stability in the Middle East and an Iraq that is not stable and not an Iraq for all people will be a source of instability for the region," she said.

Completing a shift in US policy, Rice was expected to talk to Syria and Iran, who have been accused by Washington of funding and abetting Iraq's Sunni insurgency and Shiite militias respectively.

A possible meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki would mark the first high level bilateral talks since the United States cut relations in 1980. *AFP*

Prince Harry's Iraq deployment to be delayed

LONDON—PRINCE HARRY'S DEPLOYMENT to Iraq will be delayed for as long as possible so that the rest of the soldiers in his unit can acclimatize themselves to their surroundings, The Sun tabloid reported in an early edition of its Thursday paper.

Both the Ministry of Defense and a spokesperson for the prince declined to comment on the report or details of his deployment.

According to the Sun, which cited an unidentified Army source, Harry will fly out to Iraq after the rest of his unit, who are set to leave for the war-torn country this month.

"If the men are all familiar with their new surroundings before Harry arrives, they will be far sharper to the dangers of the inevitable first attack," the Army source told the daily.

"Getting him out late is no bad thing for the rest of the lads." The head of the British Army said Monday that Harry would serve in Iraq, despite fears that insurgents could target the third-in-line to the throne.

"I have taken the decision as chief of general staff. It's my decision as chief of general staff. I have full command of everyone in the Army, including Prince Harry," Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt said in a statement.

Dannatt said the decision had been taken after the "widest possible consultation" but added that he could yet change his mind if circumstances changed.

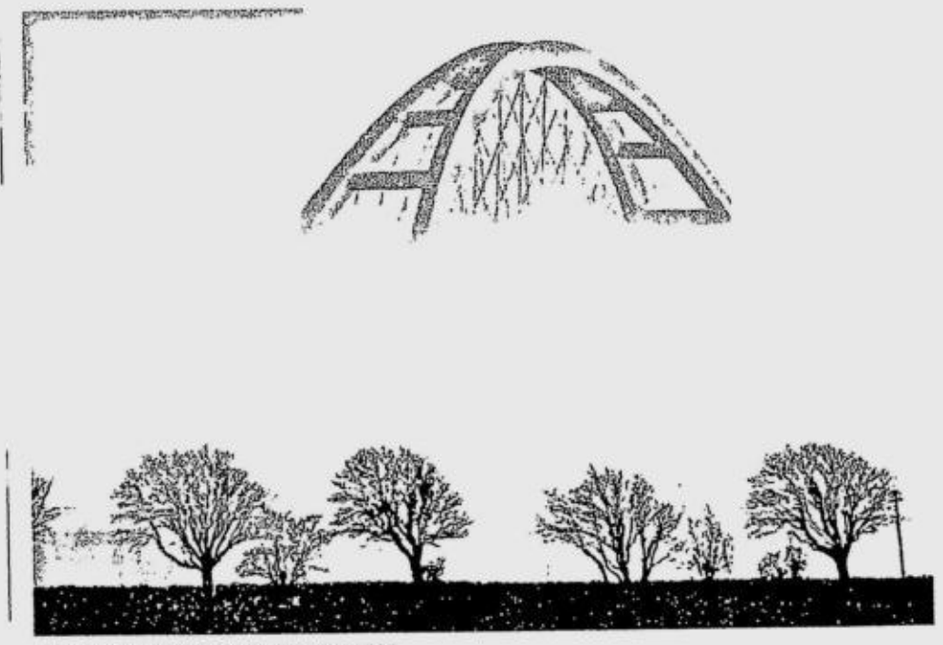
Harry, second son the Prince Charles and the late Diana, Princess of Wales, will be responsible for 11 soldiers and four Scimitar reconnaissance vehicles.

BRITAIN'S Prince Harry, younger son of Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana, in a March 2006 photo. AP

April has been one of the deadliest months for British forces in Iraq since the US-led invasion of March 2003. To date 12 lives have been lost, including a corporal doing Harry's armored reconnaissance troop leader job.

Were he to serve in Iraq, Harry would become the first British royal to see active service since his uncle Prince Andrew flew helicopters in the 1982 Falklands War with Argentina.

Britain has about 7,100 troops in Iraq, most of whom are in Basra and surrounding areas, but the government is planning to withdraw about 1,600 this year. *AFP*



IT'S NOT YOUR SET, FOLKS!
The Fehmarnsund bridge, landmark of the Baltic island of Fehmarn, is surrounded by fog on May 2. The bridge, over 963 meters leading from the continent to the island, was finished in 1963 by German architect Gerd Lohmer. AFP

Bangkok will be under water in 20 years, climate expert says

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S CAPITAL, BANGKOK, will be under water in 20 years because of rising seas from global warming and subsidence, says a top Thai climate expert who warned of a tsunami years before the 2004 disaster.

"If nothing is done, Bangkok will be at least 50 centimeters to one meter under water," Smith Dharmasaroja, head of Thailand's National Disaster Warning Center, said in an interview.

Bangkok, a sprawling city of more than 10 million people and criss-crossed by more than 1,000 canals, is between 1 and 1.5 meters (3 to 5 feet) above sea level and is sinking into its soft, loamy soil at an alarming rate, he said this week.

Smith, giving his scenario for Bangkok in 2025, is renowned in Thailand for controversial predictions.

He was dismissed as a crackpot for his tsunami warnings years before the 2004 Indian Ocean disaster which killed 5,395 Thais and foreign tourists on its Andaman Sea coast.

The problem, he says, is two-fold.

The city is subsiding at a rate of 10 cm (4 inches) per year, partly due to excessive pumping of underground water.

Global warming is causing seas to rise and there is evidence of severe coastal erosion just downstream from Bangkok.

His comments come as scientists and government officials from around the globe are meeting at a UN conference in Bangkok to work out ways to fight climate change and curb the growth of greenhouse gas emissions.

To avert disaster, Smith said, the city needed to construct a massive dyke to protect it from rising seas and increasingly violent storms.

"The system has to be started right now. Otherwise it will be too late to protect our capital city," he said.

As if to highlight the threat from flooding and bad weather, the capital has been hit by an unexpectedly early start to the rainy season. An intense storm has also caused widespread flooding in parts of southern and central Thailand.

Asked what was being done to avert disaster, Smith said:

"The government does not pay any attention at all." *Reuters*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Suns, Spurs book semis showdown /A31

SPORTS

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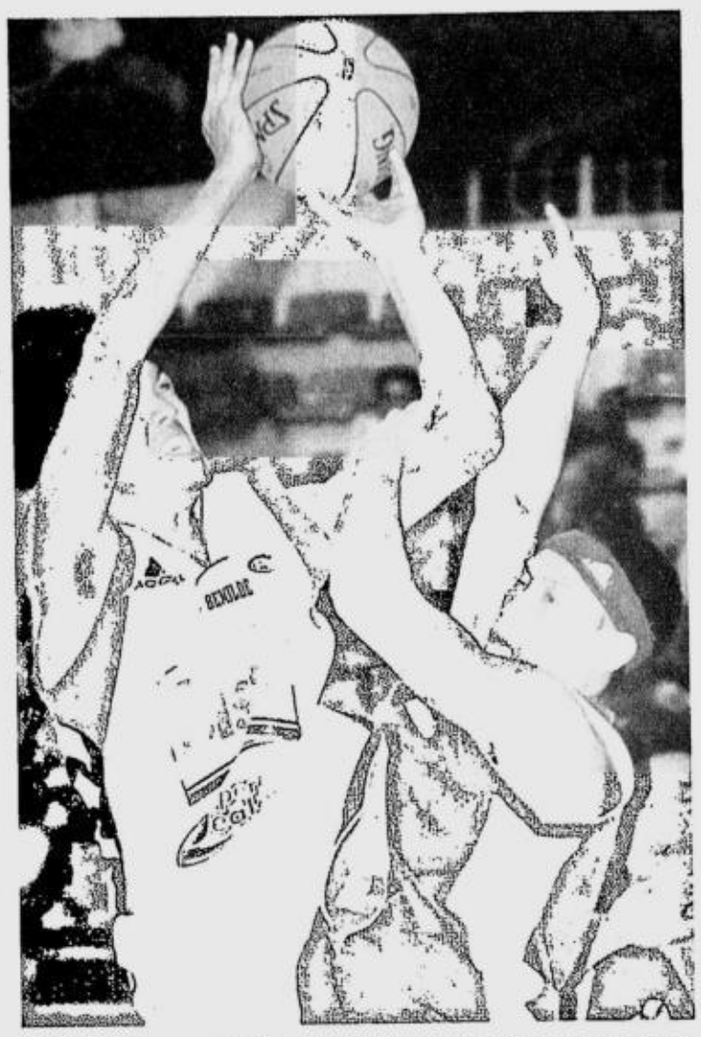
Beverage Masters clip Whoppers in overtime



A DRIVING Lawrence Bonus (left) of Henkel Sista draws a foul from Dazz's Mark Moreno in yesterday's game. INQUIRER PHOTO/ RYAN LIM

By Jasmine W. Payo

JEFF CHAN AND JONAS VILLANUEVA BURIED key baskets in overtime as San Miguel-Magnolia slapped a second straight loss on Burger King with a 95-92 decision yesterday in the PBL Unity Cup at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

Chan topscored with 18 points while Villanueva chipped in 16, including two free throws in the last 33.3 seconds that gave the Beverage Masters a 94-89 advantage.

"Everybody accepted their responsibility; there's accountability, so we can now move on to the next level," said coach Koy Banal after the Beverage Masters improved to 2-3.

Earlier, Henkel Sista snapped out of a four-game losing spell with a 78-73 victory over Dazz 'Sang Patak.

Fritz Bauzon and Gilbert Malabanan nailed four free throws with only a minute remaining as the Super Sealers dealt the Kitchen Specialists their fourth straight defeat.

Both squads remained at the cellar with 1-4 slates, but Sista coach Caloy Garcia said his squad's first win could serve as a springboard in the next round.

"I hope this is the start of a good run for us," said Garcia.

Burger King forced the extra period at 82-all as Ronjay Buenafe sank two free throws with no time left in regulation off a foul by Gerard Jones.

Alwyn Espiritu could have given San Miguel-Magnolia a three-point cushion earlier but failed to complete a three-point play.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
12 noon—Toyota Balintawak vs Harbour Centre
2 p.m.—Magnolia vs Henkel Sista
4 p.m.—Dazz 'Sang Patak vs Cebuana

The scores:

First Game

HENKEL SISTA 78—Misa 15, Bauzon 13, Malabanan 11, Bonus 11, Javier 11, Eman 6, Saldua 4, yambao 4, Alfad 3, Matias 0, Villamin 0, Robles 0, Ebuen 0.

DAZZ 73—Juntilla 15, J. Rodriguez 10, Larong 9, Sanz 8, Butel 6, Cenita 5, Moreño 4, Raymundo 4, Hugnatan 4, Mercado 2, Bucao 2, L. Rodriguez 2, Labagala 2, Omandam 0.

Quarters: 16-21, 34-37, 60-56, 78-73

Second Game

MAGNOLIA 95—Chan 18, Villanueva 16, Magpayo 13, Espiritu 12, Bombeo 11, Custodio 8, Jones 6, Angeles 5, Benitez 2, Rañeses 2, Doruelo 2.

BURGER KING 92—Buenafe 19, Bravo 17, Quiñahan 13, Urbiztondo 12, David 11, Mendoza 10, Te 5, Viray 3, Saguindel 2, Ballesteros 0, Aquino 0, Del Rosario 0, Garrido 0.

Quarters: 21-13, 42-35, 59-60, 82-82 (reg), 95-92

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Tiger, Lions in clash of champs

COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONS CLASH AS UAAP titleholder University of Santo Tomas and NCAA winner San Beda fight for the early lead in the Filoil-Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup today at The Arena in San Juan.

The Tigers will be shooting for their second victory in the 6 p.m. nightcap after winning by default over Perpetual Help last Wednesday.

The Lions will also vie for their second win in three games after bowing to National University in an 84-78 decision two days ago.

Jose Rizal University and Mapua gun for their second straight triumph when they clash in the curtain-raiser at noon.

GAMES TODAY
(The Arena, San Juan)
12 noon—Mapua vs JRU
2 p.m.—PCU vs UP
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs Letran
6 p.m.—UST vs San Beda

Philippine Christian U takes on the debuting University of the Philippines at 2 p.m. while Ateneo aims to end its winless run against Letran at 4.

The JRU Bombers pulled off a 61-57 win over the NU Bulldogs with Jason Nocom and Marvin Hayes pacing a balanced charge in the Sunday opener while the Cardinals outlasted the Ateneo Eagles in double overtime, 86-80, Wednesday.

The Eagles earlier absorbed a 71-69 loss to La Salle Archers in the opener. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Jockey Ladiana gets 3 weeks

By Musong R. Castillo

JOCKEY JEFFREY LADIANA HAS BEEN SUSpended for three weeks by the Philippine Racing Commission for an infraction aboard Empire King during the Imported Stakes Series two weeks ago.

Ladiana was penalized when "he swerved Empire King into the path of Real Spicy in the final turn without being (at least) two lengths ahead," said former jockey and now Philracom commissioner Eduardo Domingo Jr. yesterday.

Domingo headed the panel that investigated the incident which drew a public outcry following the loss of Real Spicy, last year's Horse of the Year. He also said that the first time Real Spicy was thrown out wide by Empire King in the first turn was "allowable" under riding rules.

Longshot Stop Talking, an imported mare from Australia, won the race under Jessie B. Guce with Empire King second and Real Spicy third.

Hermie Esguerra, Real Spicy's owner, blasted the board of stewards for not being able to protect the interest of the betting public.

Red Bull takes on TNT today

RED BULL TRIES TO STAY CLOSE behind Barangay Ginebra when the defending champion Bulls clash with hot Talk 'N Text today in the PBA Fiesta Cup at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Tied for second with Air21 at 8-3, a full game behind the streaking Gin Kings, the Bulls seek a win in the 7:20 p.m. game to stay within range of an automatic semifinal seat.

Enrico Villanueva will continue to play for the Bulls until next week before he goes on national duty for the Fiba-Asia Club Championship set in Tehran, Iran.

Talk 'N Text goes into the contest with a three-game winning streak and could prove to be more than a handful for the Bulls.

Meanwhile, Purefoods' manpower woes worsened after the Commissioner's Office yesterday suspended import Marquin Chandler for one game and fined him P20,000 for incurring two technical fouls against Red Bull last April 22.

Chandler came into physical contact with referee Nol Quilinquen while disputing a call late in the second quarter. The Tender Juicy Giants, who still managed to win despite that handicap, will parade a depleted all-Filipino roster against Coca-Cola in the 4:35 p.m. game.

STANDINGS	W	L
Ginebra	9	2
Red Bull	8	3
Air21	8	3
Alaska	7	4
Talk 'N Text	6	5
San Miguel	4	7
Purefoods	4	7
Coca-Cola	4	7
Sta. Lucia	3	8
Welcoat	2	9

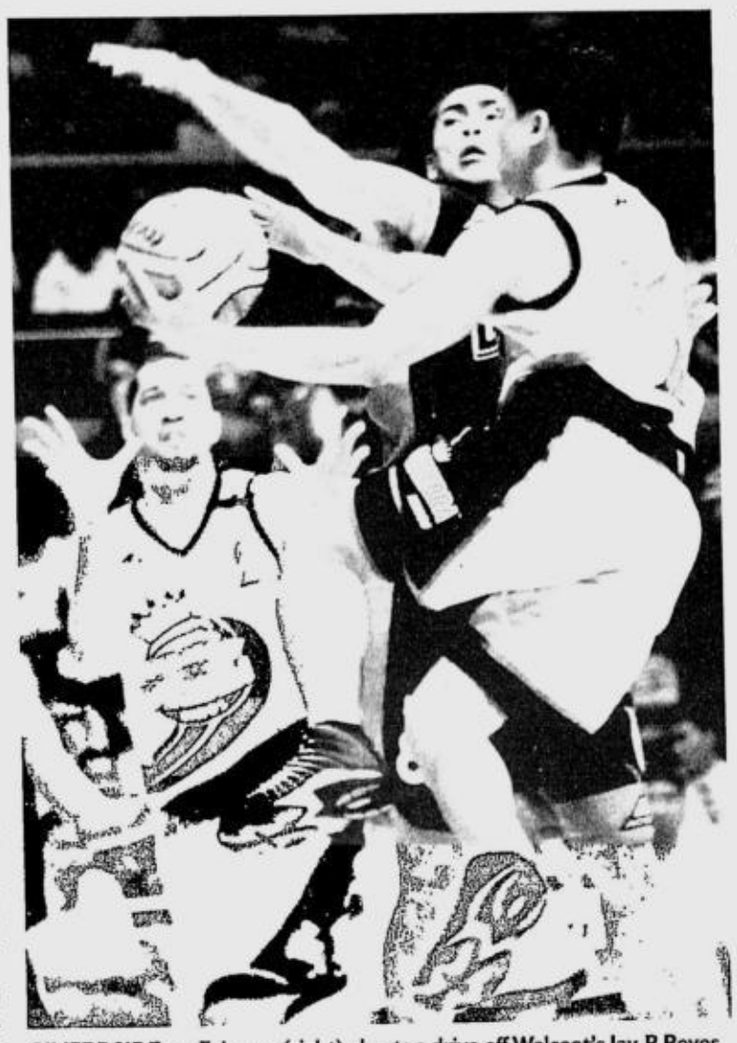
GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Purefoods
7:20 p.m.—Red Bull vs Talk 'N Text

The load will again fall on the shoulders of James Yap, who bailed out the Giants in that game with 36 points, and streaky Peter June Simon.

Jeff Varem, Coca-Cola's new import, still has to taste a win in two games but the Tigers will now come into their game with the Giants the solid favorites to win for the first time in five games.

John Arigo, Ali Peek, Alex Cabagnot and Kenneth Duremdes are expected to lead Coca-Cola, which opened this tournament with three straight wins but has gone 1-7 since.

James Penny will lead Red Bull, while JJ Sullinger will be the focal point of Talk 'N Text, although Mac Cardona has shown vast offensive improvement lately. *Musong R. Castillo*



GINEBRA'S Egay Echavez (right) aborts a drive off Welcoat's Jay-R Reyes to feed teammate Andy Seigle (left) in a recent game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Boom Boom 2-1 fave over Argentinian

By Salven Lagumbay
Contributor

BAUTISTA

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA —Undefeated Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista has been installed a 2-1 favorite to inflict a first defeat on Argentinian Sergio Manuel Medina when they clash here Saturday in the first televised portion of the pay-per-view "The World Awaits" card.

Bautista was picked as a minus-200 favorite to defeat Medina, while Medina is a plus-160 underdog going into the fight, according to MGM's Sportsbook yesterday.

Minus 200 means a $200 bet on Bautista will win $100 while a $100 bet on Medina will earn $160.

"This only means that Bautista has already made inroads into the American boxing fans' consciousness, and that's a good development," Sammy Gello-ani, Bautista's manager, said when asked for comment.

Meanwhile, ABS-CBN will air the life story of Bautista's rise from poverty in Candijay, Bohol, in a special episode on its program "Maalaala Mo Kaya" tonight. The show is hosted by Charo Santos-Concio.

"He began as a wood gatherer, a simple boy in Candijay," said Bautista's chief handler Antonio L. Aldeguer in a separate interview. "And now, he is already in boxing's center stage in Las Vegas. That's quite an accomplishment for the boy."

If victorious, Bautista could be lined up to challenge WBO super bantam champ Daniel Ponce De Leon late this year as a headliner in the "Boxing World Cup" in Cebu which will feature at least four world title bouts in one night.

Ranks of Pinoy SEA Games champs decimated

By June Navarro

ALMOST HALF OF THE FILIPINO GOLD AND SILVER medalists during the previous Southeast Asian Games won't be in Thailand this year.

Mark Joseph, deputy secretary general of the Philippine Olympic Committee, yesterday said 30 percent of the country's 282 medal winners two years ago have either retired or been inactive.

Some 30 more former SEAG winners were left out of the Thailand Games after 24 events were stricken off the list of disciplines.

Joseph said the SEAG Task Force learned of the decimated roster of champions in the course of its consultation with the national sports associations which are sending athletes to the biennial competitions.

"Of the 41 NSAs, the Task Force has already consulted 26," said Joseph. "We will wrap up the consultations with the 15 other NSAs in about a week's time."

Four categories in traditional boat racing, three in arnis and a couple of events in diving and billiards, apart from several other events or weight categories in wushu, shooting, bodybuilding, boxing and wrestling will not be on the 24th SEAG roster.

"We're starting to discover the plan of Thailand on how to unseat us," said Joseph, who represents the POC in the SEAG Task Force along with committee head Julian Camacho and deputy Romy Ribano.

"We won golds in the 24 events that were excluded from the roster of events for Thailand SEAG," said Joseph.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be advised that Michael "Mike" Yabut (whose latest available photo appears below) is no longer connected with Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation ("PSPC"). Accordingly, Mr. Yabut 's authority to transact, negotiate and deal on behalf of PSPC has been revoked.

Should you be contacted by Mr. Yabut, we would appreciate if you could immediately report the matter to the Security Manager at the following Telephone no. 816-6501 extension No. 6859.

(PDI - May 4, 2007)

Nat'l wushu meet gets under way

ASIAN GAMES GOLD MEDALIST RENE CATALAN and a slew of former world champions plunge into action today at the start of the 2007 Wushu National Championship at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The two-day event, organized by the Wushu Federation of the Philippines headed by Julian Camacho and secretary general Edwin Pimentel, is aimed at promoting the sport and test the level of competition of the elite athletes.

Pimentel said the event is part of the association's grassroots development and elite training program.

"We also hope to discover new talents in preparation for the forthcoming SEA Games in Thailand and other major international competitions, including the next year's Beijing Olympics," said Pimentel.

Aside from Catalan, other former world champions competing in the event backed by the Philippine Sports Commission are Eduard Folayang, Rexel Nganhayna. Arvin Ting and Willy Wang—all products of the annual championships.

SPORTSWATCH

PCCA derby fires off in Pasay

THE CRUCIAL SEVENTH LEG OF THE PASAY Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 5-Cock Derby Series blasts off today at Pasay City Cockpit with some 60 fights sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Two more PCCA derbies will be staged before the Cocker of the Year winner is finally known. According to pit managers Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano, the Cocker of the Year winner will receive a hefty cash prize and trophy. Nelson Salvanera (Super Pacman) and Osang dela Cruz (Goldquest Champ) ruled the sixth leg on April 13.

Macamay grandmom dies

BENEDICTA KAAMIÑO BELTRAN, GRANDMOTHER and former guardian of People's Journal sportswriter Zean W. Macamay, died yesterday at the St. Luke's Medical Center. She was 85. Her remains are at the Holy Family Chapel of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church. Interment will be on Sunday at Himlayang Pilipino. She is survived by sons Antonio and Ruperto, daughter Josefina, grandchildren Melanie, Mark, Edward, Jacquelyn, Patricia, Miguel and great grandchildren.

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Bumblee Bee (3), Lovely Bid (2), Xtreme Heat (5), Kim Possible (4)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Bundok Peninsula (6), Easy Rider (3), Speed Admiral (2), Showtime lady (1)
Race 3—(Tri)—Dualargo/Fantastic Find (3), Hazmagic (4), Batang Westside (1)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Dancing Slew (1), Look Of Love (6), Valiente (6), Mark's Rose (5)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Cats ON Fire (4), Superamerica (1), Cambat (2), Condoleeza (6)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Run Dodling Fly/Gelay's Charm (4), Celestial (8), Brazen Truth (2), Top Quest (7)
Race 7—(Tri)—Strong Dancer (2), Miata (1), Even Storm (3)
Race 8—(Qrt/Tri)—On The Fairway (6), Complexion (8), Arctic Desert (4), Super Wind (1)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Interceptor (3), Shaolin (6), Maginoo's Pride (9), Look Who's Playing (5), My Lucky One (2), Take A Strike (1)

RACING TIPS

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Sealed proposals for the purchase on CASH BASIS of the properties listed below will be received at the Office of the Assistant Vice President, **Pampanga Lending Center, LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES**, 3rd Floor Freluz Bldg., Olongapo-Gapan Road, Dolores, City of San Fernando Pampanga not later than **May 14, 2007 (Monday), 10:00 AM** at which place, date and time said proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders.

DESCRIPTION/LOCATION	MINIMUM BID
A 19,887 square meter parcel of land (Lot 4-B-4, Psd 03-005172) located along NLEX Dau Service Road, about 60 meters from Dau Toll Gate, Dau, Mabalacat, Pampanga, registered in the name of Landbank per TCT No. 516803-R including improvements thereon (Showroom/Office Bldg., service center, resthouse etc.)	P39,705,949.00

Bid forms, Rules and Regulations may be obtained from the Office of the Assistant Vice President, Pampanga Lending Center, **LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES, 3rd Floor, Freluz Building, Olongapo-Gapan Road, Dolores City of San Fernando, Pampanga**. Prospective bidders are enjoined to inspect the above-cited properties before entering their bid.

The sale of the above-mentioned property/ies is at an **"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"** basis. The winning bidder/s shall take possession of the awarded property/ies without seeking assistance from the Bank. The award in favor of the winning bidder shall be subject to the approval of the LBP approving authorities.

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(PDI - May 3, 4 & 5, 2007)

PHOENIX Suns' Raja Bell (left), Amare Stoudemire (center) and Steve Nash congratulate each other late in the fourth quarter against the Los Angeles Lakers. REUTERS

Suns, Spurs book semis showdown

NEW YORK—THE PHOENIX SUNS ELIMINATED the Los Angeles Lakers from the playoffs with a 119-110 home win in Game Five of their Western Conference best-of-seven series on Wednesday.

The Suns advanced to the semifinals and a matchup with the San Antonio Spurs, who sealed a 4-1 series victory over the Denver Nuggets. Game One is in Phoenix on Sunday.

"We're playing solid basketball," said Amare Stoudemire, who had 27 points and 16 rebounds.

"The way we're playing now, we've got a chance to beat pretty much any team. But there's not bold predictions for the next round because the Spurs are a heck of a team."

The Suns, who got 17 points and 10 assists from Steve Nash and 26 points from Shawn Marion, raced to a 15-point lead in the second quarter and were up 78-64 with 6:34 left in the game.

The Lakers scored the next seven points and eventually came within five points of the Suns before Stoudemire made five free throws and a jump shot in the final three minutes.

It was the second straight season the Suns have eliminated the Lakers from the playoffs. Last season they did it by rallying from a 3-1 deficit.

Kobe Bryant scored 34 points for the Lakers and Lamar Odom had 33 and 10 rebounds.

"Personally for me, it's beyond frustration," said Bryant, who last won an NBA championship in 2002.

"Three years and still being at ground zero. This summer's a big summer. We have to see what direction we want to take this organization. Make those steps and make them now."

Suns guard Raja Bell played despite being up the previous night at hospital with his wife, who delivered a baby boy.

Bell had eight points and three assists in 41 minutes of playing time.

Michael Finley hit a franchise-record eight three-pointers and scored 26 points as the San Antonio Spurs eliminated the Denver Nuggets in five games with a 93-78 win.

Tim Duncan added 23 points, 12 rebounds and five assists.

Carmelo Anthony and Allen Iverson each scored 21 points for the Nuggets but had an offnight shooting—Anthony went 8-of-20 and Iverson 6-of-22. *Reuters*

GAME TODAY (Basketball TV)
10:30 a.m.—Dallas vs Golden State

Roy named Rookie of the Year

NEW YORK—PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS GUARD BRANDON Roy was named the National Basketball Association's Rookie of the Year Wednesday. In balloting released Wednesday, Roy was the runaway winner, receiving 127 of 128 first-place votes and 638 points from a panel of sportswriters and broadcasters in North America. In the last 30 years, the only unanimous choices have been David Robinson in 1990 and Ralph Sampson in 1984. Roy is the first Trail Blazer in 35 years to win the award. *AFP*

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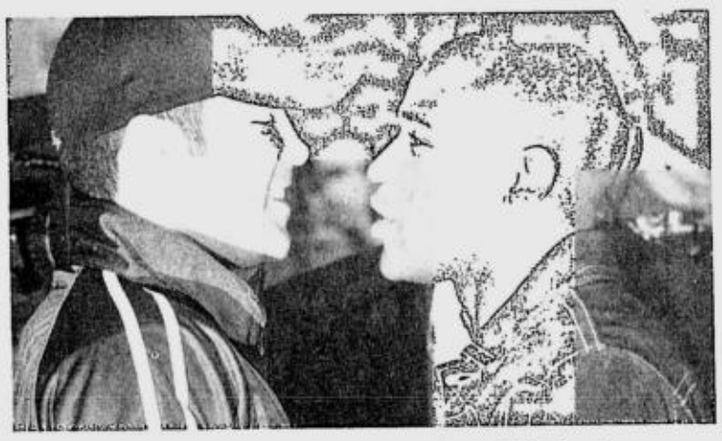


MAYWEATHER Jr. (right) and De La Hoya face off Wednesday. AP

Floyd Jr., Oscar trade verbal jabs

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—UNBEATEN Floyd Mayweather guaranteed victory while Oscar de la Hoya promised to be faster and more aggressive in their final public comments before Saturday's super-welterweight showdown.

Trading their final verbal jabs at a news conference here Wednesday, the US fighters kept to their prefight roles with Mayweather taunting a calm and composed De la Hoya in a face-to-face staredown.

"I said, 'I'm not worried about you.' I told him he's facing the truth," Mayweather said. "He's nervous. I see it in his eyes. The eyes tell it all. He is going to be a little shakey. He is nervous.

"I will dominate him. Don't be surprised if I stop him. He is a quitter. I've never given up. This best fighter ever is Floyd Mayweather and I'm going to guarantee you a victory."

De la Hoya, 38-4 with 30 knockouts, is defending his World Boxing Council super-welterweight crown while Mayweather, 37-0 with 24 knockouts, is considered the world's top pound-for-pound fighter.

"I don't see this fight going the distance," De la Hoya said. "I've prepared myself to go out and battle. That's what I have to do. It's just a matter of sticking to my game plan.

"Don't be surprised if I'm faster than Mayweather. The Oscar you will see in there will match Mayweather's speed if not surpass it." De la Hoya, 34, has been a world champion in six weight classes. Mayweather, 30, has been a world champ in four weight classes. *AFP*

Valencia rips Iloilo

POTOTAN, ILOILO—THE VAlencia Golden Harvest flaunted a balanced offense to repeat over the Toyota-Iloilo Warriors, 78-70, in the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup at the sports complex here.

The Golden Harvest of Mayor Jose Galario Jr. opened a 12-point spread and never wavered as the Warriors failed in its last-ditch rally.

Former Rookie of the Year Buboy Berami scored 16 points to lead four Valencia players in double figures.

The Warriors of businessman Robert Uy cut the double-digit deficit to just five, 41-36, at the turn but the Golden Harvest detonated a 13-0 bomb at the start of the second half to pull away.

The Warriors supported by Mayor Jerry Treñas and the Iloilo Basketball League dropped to 1-7.

The NBC Game of the Week is being aired 6:30 pm every Friday over at Basketball TV. League updates can be accessed at www.nbcphilippines.com.

The scores:

VALENCIA 78—Berami 16, Concha 13, Cruz 11, Saladaga 11, Dragon 8, Malcontento 7, Bolias 5, Clavel 4, Adams 3, Mella 0.

ILOILO 70—Balgos 17, Sinco 14, Sencil 8, Allado 6, Leonida 6, Guanco 5, Laborte 5, Senieres 5, Tizon 4, Poral 0, Cortel 0.

Quarters: 24-12, 41-36, 63-52, 78-70.

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget
200 Pcs. Dot Matrix Printer	P7,000,000.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department at the 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila starting May 4, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,500.00.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at Procurement Department Conference Room at 2:00 PM, May 10, 2007. Bidding for the above requirement is scheduled on May 23, 2007 at 1:00 PM.

Please address your queries to the Head-Secretarial, Bids and Awards Committee, or call 405-7370; 551-0000 locals 2290 & 2293.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

(PDI - May 4, 2007) BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

CAGELCO II

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the following:

1. **Supply and Installation of 5 MVA Outdoor Power Transformer** for our Casambalangan Sub-Station at Sta. Ana, Cagayan. The Power Transformer must be rated 5 MVA, 3-Phase, HV-67kV / LV-13.8kV, 60Hz, ONAN Cooling, Off-Circuit Tap Changer, Dyn 1 Connection and Drying process shall use Vapour Phase System.
2. **Supply and Delivery of Wood Poles** for distribution and sub-transmission line.

To be qualified, bidder must have fully complied with the following:

1. Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Committee Chairman, Clarence E. Jacinto)
   a. Company Profile
   b. Business Registration
   c. Business Permit
   d. BIR/VAT Certificate
   e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
   f. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years
   g. Financial Statement
   h. Compliance with the must technical specifications
2. Must be able to pay P5,000.00 for Item #1 and P2,000.00 for Item #2 for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accepts proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Pre-bid conference and bidding schedules shall be informed to all qualified bidders through fax and mails.

Deadline for submission of requirements – May 16, 2007

(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. TORDESILLAS
General Manager

CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Macanaya District, Aparri, Cagayan
Tel. No. (078) 888-2173 • Telefax No. (078) 822-8900
E-mail: cagelco2main@digitelone.com

(PDI – May 3 & 4, 2007)

dti
TRADE & INDUSTRY

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **"Supply and Delivery of Five (5) Units of Brand New Air-conditioned Shuttle Buses"** of the Department of Trade and Industry, with an approved budget of Twenty-two million pesos (Php 22,000,000.00).

Bid documents will be available for issuance starting 4 May 2007 until 5:00 p.m. of 11 May 2007 during office hours at the DTI-BAC Secretariat, 6/F Trade & Industry Building, 361 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City c/o Mr. Maynard R. Peralta, with telephone number 751-5984, after paying a non-refundable fee of Ten thousand pesos (Php 10,000.00). A pre-bid conference will be held on 11 May 2007, 9:30 a.m at the Center Conference Room, 6th Floor, Trade & Industry Building, 361 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

Deadline for the submission of the eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals, and the opening of bids will be on 23 May 2007, 9:30 a.m. at the Center Conference Room, 6th Floor, Trade & Industry Building, 361 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City. The DTI Bids and Awards Committee will not entertain late bidders.

The DTI reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract in any of the situations enumerated in Section 41 of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and its implementing rules and regulations, without the DTI assuming any responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

(Sgd.) MARIA LOURDES T. BAUA
Assistant Secretary
Chairperson, DTI Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - May 4, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
CHIYODA PHILIPPINES CORPORATION, Meralco Avenue cor. Gen. Araneta St., Pasig City	Mitsugu Fukuda	General Manager for Accounting & Administration Department
CHIYODA PHILIPPINES CORPORATION, Meralco Avenue cor. Gen. Araneta St., Pasig City	Toru Odawa	Vice President for I.T. Software Department
CHIYODA PHILIPPINES CORPORATION, Meralco Avenue cor. Gen. Araneta St., Pasig City	Akira Utatsu	Vice President for Process Engineering Department
P2P-ENGLISH INC., #1 Juno St. cor. Makati Ave., Brgy. Bel- Air, Makati City	Sangwon Baek	President
SOUTH SEA LANGUAGE CENTER CORP., Unit A, 8/F, 4980 Guanzon St., Brgy. Poblacion, Makati City	Sung Hoon Jung	Manager
UNITED SOUTH INTL. BUSINESS CENTER, INC., 111-A Aguirre Ave., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Minjung Lee	General Manager
IWEBMASTERS.COM, INC., U-807 Antel 2000 Bldg., Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Gregory Gaskell	Sales Manager
HSBC ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (PHILS.), INC., 5150 North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Jessica Nicole O'Connell	Assistant Vice President - Operations
CCT CONSTRUCTORS CORPORATION, 3/F Princess Bldg., 104 Esteban St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Takuya Matsumoto	Engineering Manager
CONFIDENCE & COMMUNICATION ACADEMY, INC., 26 J. Elizalde St., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Han Jung Youn	Marketing Manager
AESTHEMORE CORPORATION, Kingswood Condominium, Makati 9H Tower B cor. Vito Cruz Extension, Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Heui Kim	General Manager
NK INTERNATIONAL CO. LTD., Unit 908 Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Kwan Sik Nam	President
CHINA ROAD & BRIDGE CORPORATION, Suite 1001, 10/F Ma. Natividad Bldg., 470 T.M. Kalaw Avenue, Ermita, Manila	Qiang Li	Deputy Branch General Manager
CHINA ROAD & BRIDGE CORPORATION, Suite 1001, 10/F Ma. Natividad Bldg., 470 T.M. Kalaw Avenue, Ermita, Manila	Huan Xu	Engineer

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 338-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI May 4, 2007)

PETRON
Fuel Success.

A NEW FUEL BENCHMARK

Petron introduces breakthrough fuel

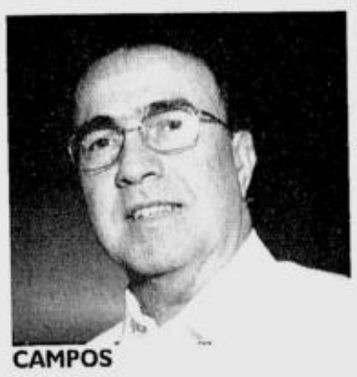
By Raquel P. Gomez

MARKET LEADER and fuel innovator Petron recently introduced XCS Complete Combustion System, a breakthrough fuel technology customized for Philippine driving conditions and the first gasoline powered by organic combustion enhancers that give the engine a cleaner burn and optimized power.

The pioneering product from Petron will again set a standard for other local gasoline products to aspire for according to Petron president Khalid Al-Faddagh. "The new Petron XCS is designed for the 21st century. It features a premium organic additive, a proprietary formulation developed exclusively for Petron that makes the engine maximize its power and become fuel efficient. We believe that the new XCS will again set a benchmark for local gasoline products."

Petron pioneered the "cleaning action" additive for carburetor systems with the introduction of the first XCS in 1996. In 2000, with the shift to unleaded gasoline and fuel-injection engine systems, Petron introduced XCS Plus with the anti-valve seat recession and engine-protection additives to address the need of leaded gasoline users who were hesitant to switch to unleaded fuel for fear of engine damage.

AL-FADDAGH


CAMPOS

PAPACHRISTOS

TOLEDO

DEL ROSARIO

The third generation Petron XCS, according to Jose Campos, Petron vice president for marketing, features the organic combustion enhancers or fuel organic additives that work on the entire fuel system of the vehicle to bring out various performance benefits such as more power, fuel economy, and clean exhaust emissions.

Campos said the new Petron XCS is a complete new formulation that answers the current vehicle market demands and environmental concerns. He said Petron embarked on a thorough five-year research and development to come up with a new gasoline that will respond well to the requirements of new engine technologies, tropical driving conditions and the social and environmental demands.

"There is a big clamor not only for fuel efficiency, but for less maintenance of vehicles. With a growing concern for climate change, there is a demand as well for environment-friendly fuels," said Campos.

The new Petron XCS is the result of Petron's strong partnership with Innospec, a global specialty chemicals company and the largest dedicated fuel additives specialist in the world with over US$300 million operation on fuel specialties alone.

Miltos Papachristos, Innospec business director for fuel specialties in Asia Pacific, said the new additives technology blended into the new Petron gasoline will contribute to a cleaner environment in terms of reduced pollutants coming out of the exhaust of engines.

"We've done a lot of work in the past five years and taken measures to demonstrate that hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide are reduced as a result of the cleaning effect of the additives in the fuel delivery system and in the engine itself. The new gasoline is good to the environment and at the same time gives an engine performance needed in such difficult driving conditions such as the Philippines."

Petron's technical services general manager Willie Toledo added, "Being a local company has its advantages. Because we are totally focused on the Philippine market, we can customize our fuels to the special needs of Filipino motorists. We can also formulate fuels which best fit local conditions such as heat, dust, driving habits, and engine types."

Based on the tests conducted on the new Petron XCS, the power the new gasoline provides the engine is about 2 to 23 percent higher compared with the power given by other competing brands, according to Toledo. He added that a six percent fuel savings can be achieved with the new Petron XCS.

The new Petron XCS has been formulated to keep the engine running close to design conditions that motor manufacturers promise the new vehicle owner, according to Papachristos. He added that the new gasoline, with its very effective cleaning properties can also be advantageous to older vehicles.

"The fuel is designed to give an almost instantaneous cleanup or removal of deposits from the engine so it means that the engine becomes more responsive to acceleration. It's running closer to design conditions so that even people who are using old cars will start feeling the difference almost immediately as a result of that rapid removal of carbon deposits."

With a competitive price, the new Petron XCS is now available throughout the 1,260 service stations Petron has all over the Philippines. Ramon del Rosario, Petron's general manager for reseller trade, said the dealers are optimistic about the new gasoline, which is an effective product motorists will always demand.

"The breakthrough gasoline is something that's very much needed this time when the market is becoming competitive. There are a lot of new entrants who offer cheap fuel prices which also means cheap fuel. We stick to our company policy to continuously provide better value to motorists. For the same price, we're providing a much superior product."

Unleash true engine power with the new Petron XCS

PETRON XCS COMPLETE COMBUSTION SYSTEM

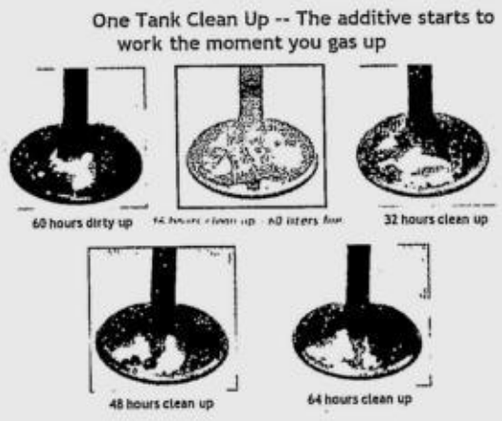
THE NEW Petron XCS Complete Combustion System unleashes true engine power by providing the following performance benefits:

Excellent detergency cleans up engine deposits quickly and maintains engine cleanliness.

The new Petron XCS is effective in cleaning carburetor deposits in older vehicles, as well as fuel port injector deposits in newer engines. In addition to providing protection against formation of intake valve deposits, the detergent additive also removes existing deposits, which results in improved power and fuel economy.

A complex combination of additive chemistries promotes better fuel consumption.

The new Petron XCS conditions the fuel to promote better atomization resulting to more efficient combustion. Performance tests among competitive fuels show that the new XCS delivers 9 to 22 percent reduction in fuel consumption in both city and highway driving.



Better combustion enables the engine to work at maximum power.

The latest additive present in the new XCS offers the benefit of more efficient combustion and reduced emissions. It burns longer with more uniformity, and produces more energy to maximize engine power. Removal and prevention of deposits from the fuel system also enables the engine to produce maximum power output.

95-RON fuel ensures better driveability and smoother acceleration.

The new XCS is a 95-RON fuel and meets the octane rating requirements of most modern vehicles. It resists engine knock and provides significant improvements in acceleration performance.

Designed to cater to all types of vehicles, the new Petron XCS Complete Combustion System ensures that your vehicle get as close to complete combustion of fuel the minute you start the engine. With a complete combustion of fuel, you get maximum power out of your car's engine because all that chemical energy is converted to useful power.

The novelty of the organic combusting enhancers in the new Petron XCS is that they do not contain any metal. They're based on carbon, hydrogen and oxygen and when they go to the combustion chamber of the engine, they combust cleanly--absolutely leaving behind no metallic residue that can harm the environment.

Next gen road warriors use the new Petron XCS

Meet the new faces of the dynamic car race world Tyson Sy, Mark Bumgarner, Matteo Guidicelli. Young, totally driven, and hungry for top speeds, these champs and new heroes of the road optimize to the max the power of their powerful vehicles with the new Petron XCS.

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WB guarantees RP infra thrust

IN THIS ISSUE

Auditing firm sees
PSEi hitting 4,000 in '07 /B3

Gov't set to borrow
P325.6B next year /B5

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES HAS RECEIVED A COMMITMENT FROM THE World Bank to provide either loans or guarantees for private sector firms that will invest in priority infrastructure projects as identified by the government.

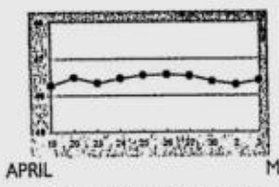
Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that the World Bank has expressed its intention to help the country push through with its infrastructure projects during the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings held in Washington last month.

"The World Bank has broached the idea of

WB GUARANTEES/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 47.59 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 3, 2007

Shares close flat

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed flat as investors cashed in on early gains and adopted a cautious stance ahead of the upcoming May 14 mid-term elections, dealers said.

The composite index slipped 0.46 points to 3,271.53 after trading between 3,263.49 and 3,293.35.

The broader all-share index fell

SHARES/ B2

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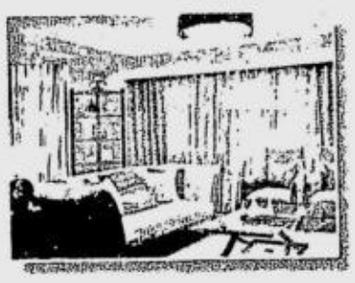

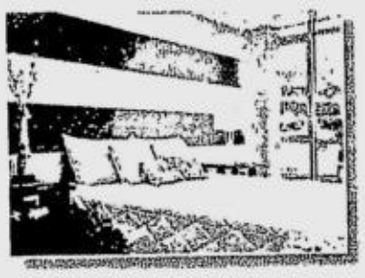

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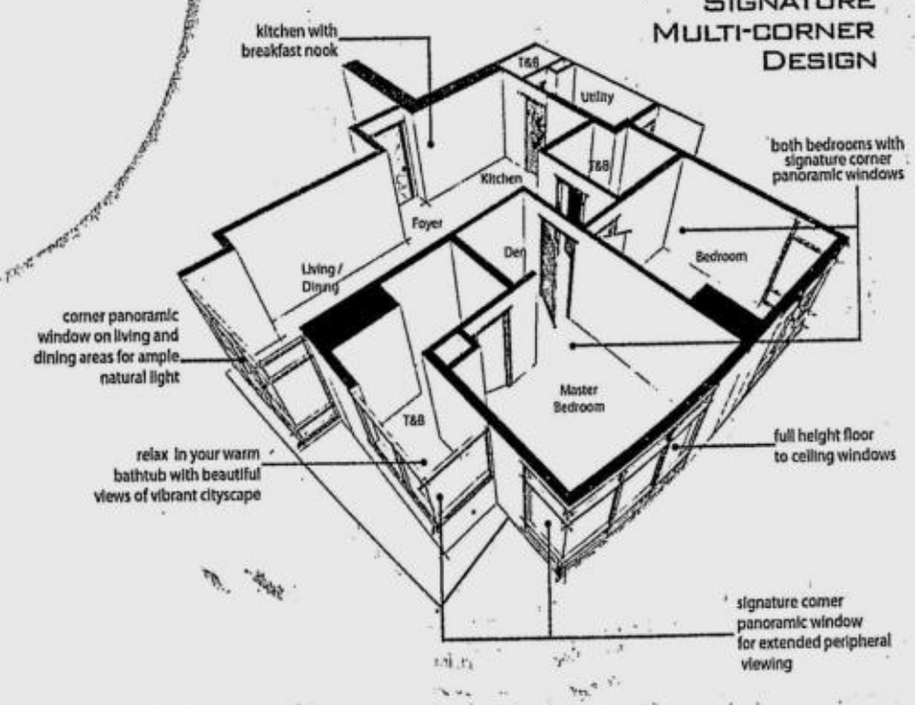

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Mining sector expects to hit paydirt, cites $1-B prospects

2 firms strike gold in Abra, Compostela

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE LOCAL MINING INDUSTRY HAS slated in June an international conference to follow through on the promotion of Philippine mineral prospects, as two more firms announced the discovery of gold deposits in Abra and Compostela Valley.

"From June 5 to 7, we are holding a conference with the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Federation of Mining Associations," said Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez, president of the Chamber of Mines. "We expect legends of the global industry to grace the gathering."

In a statement, Canadian firm Sur American Gold Corp. said it had confirmed a significant discovery known as the Cadan Copper-Gold Porphyry Target in Compostela Valley in Mindanao.

Describing the find as a "tremendously exciting target," company president Brett Taylor said the Cadan prospect was the first new discovery of its type in the region for 25 years.

"Without doubt, this is a significant discovery by the company, (demonstrating) the mineral potential and development opportunities in this part of East Mindanao," Taylor said.

Also, Canadian miner Olympus Pacific Minerals Inc. said its drilling activities in the Capcapo area of Abra revealed a mineralized zone stretching from the surface to a depth of 94 meters.

The zone yielded an average of 1.49 grams of gold per ton of ore, 0.31 percent copper and 5.6 grams of silver.

Roger Dahn, company vice president, said the firm took on the project due to the characteristics the area shared with the Baguio (gold mining) district.

By Amy R. Remo

THE CHAMBER OF MINES has estimated that a total of $348 million in foreign investments will be coming in this year, and expects the inflows to rise steadily to $1 billion a year over the next five years.

"2008 is a big year for the mining sector as several projects would make decisions on whether to make a go with their investments," Chamber of Mines president Benjamin Philip Romualdez told the Inquirer Business staff.

In 2008, several projects are expected to advance to the production stage after years of pre-feasibility and full bankable feasibility studies.

The new investments, amounting to about $1 billion each year starting in 2008, would be possible when the pending mining projects push through, added Romualdez.

"The mining sector has come a long way from when it started," he said. "Value and volume of production are likewise steadily increasing since 2004."

According to Romualdez, the mining bloc is expecting an upturn from last year, when only a little more than $108 million worth of investments came in.

Last year's investments were down from 2005, when foreign mining firms poured in about $447 million.

The drop, Romualdez said, was mainly due to the cyanide waste spill incident on Rapu Rapu Island, where Australian firm Lafayette Mining Ltd. was held responsible.

One of the mining firms that are seen to start operations this year is

ROMUALDEZ

the world's fourth largest copper producer Xstrata Plc. The firm is expected to more than triple its investments this year, and further increase investments fourfold in 2008.

The Switzerland-based company had acquired Australian company Indophil Resources NL's Philippine unit, which has rights to Southeast Asia's biggest untapped copper deposit in South Cotabato.

The Philippines is said to have $1 trillion worth of untapped gold, copper and nickel resources. Several foreign firms already have either staked their claims or expressed interest in investing in the mining ventures. Among the investors are Anglo American Plc, Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton.

Metal prices, especially for gold, copper and nickel, are rising steadily in the world market.

From page B1

Shares close flat

2.14 points to 2,079.56.

Gainers and losers were even at 48 each, with 61 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 5.8 billion shares worth P3.9 billion ($81.71 million).

PLDT closed unchanged at P2,540, while Globe Telecom lost P10 at P1,215.

Gainers included SM Prime Holdings, which advanced 25 centavos to P11.75, and Jollibee, up P2 to P53.50. Ayala Corp. edged up P5 to P600.

San Miguel A was down 50 centavos to P64 and San Miguel B was steady at P73.

AFP

From page B1

WB guarantees RP infra thrust

having a mechanism by which it can help attract investments," Teves said in a briefing yesterday. "With a guarantee, investors will be assured of a stream of income."

Teves said that the World Bank will offer to investors either loans through the International Finance Corp. (IFC) or guarantees on their investments in infrastructure projects.

IFC is an arm of the World Bank that provides loans to the private sector.

Teves said the government has 10 priority infrastructure projects with a combined estimated cost of P83 billion.

Of these projects, the most costly is the P35.5-billion construction of the Light Rail Transit Line 6, which will extend the existing Line 1 (which starts from Baclaran) to the cities of Parañaque, Las Piñas, and the adjoining municipalities of Bacoor, Imus and Dasmariñas in the province of Cavite.

The second biggest project is the extension of the North Luzon Expressway, which is worth P19.4 billion. The project includes the construction of an 84.5-kilometer road, 12 interchanges and toll collection facilities, and two bridges crossing the Agno and Bued Rivers.

The other projects are: the Bicol Emergency Power Restoration work; the Palawan South Road; the Panguil Bay Bridge; the Biñan-Sucat 230KV Transmission Line project; Line 1 North Extension; Northrail-Southrail Linkage; Quirino Highway Rehabilitation; and, the Agno River Integrated Irrigation.

Teves described the projects as "ready-to-go" because they no longer have right-of-way issues and have been endorsed by the Investment Coordination Committee.

Teves said the projects are part of the government's medium-term Philippine development plan. Being so, the government is legally allowed to provide subsidies to willing investors.

But he said the government, which is trying to reduce its budget deficit, prefers multilateral agencies like the World Bank to extend loans and guarantees to investors rather than shoulder subsidies on its own.

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Mr. Benjamin C. Zeta, President, Linaheim Corporate Services, Inc. & Integrated Waste Management, Inc.
Mr. Alejandro Aprieto, C.P.M., Head, Materials Management Department, Mirant Philippines
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Mr. Han Kian Kwang, Regional Director, DEMATIC S.E.A. Pte. Ltd.
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Mr. Noel D. Bautista, Managing Director, IDS Logistics (Philippines), Inc.
Mr. Leonard Co, Sales Manager, Star Communications
Mr. Julius Bambico, Consultant, OMNI Logistics
Mr. Abelito Quiwa, Product Engineering Manager Amkor Technology Philippines, Inc.

Invited Speakers:

Secretary Leandro Mendoza, Department of Transportation & Communication
Secretary Manuel M. Bonoan, Department of Public Works & Highways
Secretary Arthur Yap, Department of Agriculture, Presidential Adviser for Job Creation, North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle Super Region
Commissioner Abraham Abesamis, National Telecommunication Commission
Atty. Oscar M. Sevilla, General Manager, Philippine Port Authority

Program Outline:	Topic Overview:
May 11, 2007, Friday	
Procurement Outsourcing and Strategies	Learn the strategies to determine the right outsourcing approach: analyze the opportunities and challenges of outsourcing specific functions in the supply chain.
"e-Procurement"	Provides information on the different types of eProcurement such as electronic reverse auctions, electronic sourcing, electronic catalog buying and the like.
Inventing Value in Warehousing and Logistics	Learn how to carefully embraces useful technologies and capitalize on them to invent value through greater heights in quality, productivity and profitability.
Effective Transportation Management	Provide knowledge on the importance of effective logistic planning and implementation, increasing your competitiveness, eliminating costly delays and inefficiencies by enhancing freight and customs management.
Effective Distribution Management	Learn the effective basic distribution management, its roles and importance in the logistics businesses.
Enhancing Fleet Productivity and Flexibility Through GPS	Learn the 3rd eye GPS vehicle monitoring systems and use it for more flexible and real time experience.
May 12, 2007 Saturday	
Trends in 3rd Party Logistics (3PL)	Provides an overview of the 3rd party logistics marketplace wherein you will learn how to assess the pros, cons, correct application and the criteria in choosing the best 3rd party logistics partner.
Warehouse Re-Lay-outing	Learn the importance and significant effects of re-lay-outing on the company efficiency in its operations.
Ethics and Good Governance: The Sarbanes Oxley Act	Overview of the Sarbanes-Oxley. Act and how the policies will facilitate our business dealings
RFID Technology	Learn how RFID work in core warehouse functions such as receiving, picking, storing & shipping to increase performance of your supply chain
The Challenges of Global Warehousing	Provide short overview of the role of warehousing in effective logistics management and emphasize its importance in gaining competitive advantage in today's global business arena.
"The Certainty of Uncertainty Managing Complex Risk in the Supply Chain"	Provide fundamental knowledge of Risk Management to meet company's objectives & customer expectations within allocated cost, time, resource, & performance constraints.

This program was designed for Owners, Presidents, CEO's, General Managers and Managers of different departments such as Operation, Production, Planning, Delivery, Warehouse, Purchasing and to the General Public.

• Conference Investment •
• Local attendee: Php 12,000 (VAT inclusive) • Walk-in: Php 14,000
• Foreign attendee: USD 500 • Inclusion: Lunch, 2 Snacks, Manual & Certificate of Attendance

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 3, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.25	12.75	12.25	12.75	31,100
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	64	64.5	63.5	64	2,060,000
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	59	59	58.5	58.5	225,800
935	630	China Banking Corp.	865	885	865	885	220
20	16.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
119	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	108	108	103	103	65,300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	600,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	62	62	59	59.5	2,563,000
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	46	46.5	46	46	125,000
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	63	63	63	63	1,500
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27.5	2,712,400
90	41	Security Bank Corp	79	80	79	80	740,200
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
3.81	1.72	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	3	3	3	3	25,000
7.7	1.5	CirsecOnline.com Inc.	7	7	6.9	6.9	340,000
0.8	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	100,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
2,000.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	400
5	4.2	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.3	4.35	4.2	4.25	19,356,000
2.22	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.06	2.1	2.06	2.08	270,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	535	535	535	535	530
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,170.00	2,180.00	2,170.00	2,180.00	610
1.88	1.02	Vantage Corp	1.86	1.88	1.82	1.82	3,749,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
0.37	0.16	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	450,000
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	57.5	58.5	57.5	58.5	1,123,400
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	78	78.5	77.5	78.5	2,415,600
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12.25	1,133,700
81	13	Manila Electric Co. A	74.5	77	74.5	76	896,600
82	18.5	Manila Electric Co. B	75.5	77.5	75.5	76.5	2,148,100
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.8	6	5.8	5.9	36,134,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.2	5,352,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.36	1.38	441,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.8	4.85	75,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.14	2.2	2.1	2.16	220,000
3.4	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.84	1.84	182,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	16,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	52	53.5	52	53.5	970,100
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	109,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.38	2.44	2.38	2.44	120,000
67.5	61	San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	64.5	64	64	43,300
84	68	San Miguel Corp. B	73	73	72	73	187,300
24	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.	16.5	16.5	16	16	6,438,600
		CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.17	1.07	EEI Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8	302,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	55,000
9.1	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	149,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1.78	1.8	1.76	1.76	99,000
		CHEMICALS					
5.9	1.26	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.6	11,001,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	0.06	Pacific Resources Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	4,470,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.35	1.7	A. Soriano Corp	3.7	3.75	3.7	3.75	395,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	4,200,000
0.59	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.54	0.55	0.53	0.54	16,040,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. A	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.8	95,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	88,500,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	1,400,000
9.7	4.85	Abaviz Equity Ventures Inc.	9.1	9.1	8.9	8.9	2,193,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	11,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.3	1,870,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	210,000
2.24	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.22	2.24	2.16	2.18	13,054,000
680	327.5	Ayala Corp.	595	600	595	600	642,450
14	7.67	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.5	14	13.5	14	172,400
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.7	89,000
4.45	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	11,688,000
7.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	422,000
1.3	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. A	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	4,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	159,000
0.42	0.13	Forum Pacific Inc.	0.27	0.3	0.27	0.3	2,050,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.5	12	1,762,800
2.6	0.6	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. A	2.3	2.6	2.3	2.6	101,000
2.65	1	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	2.6	2.65	2.5	2.55	220,000
0.43	0.185	Medco Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	290,000
12.5	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	10.75	11	694,400
3.6	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	3.25	3.35	3.15	3.15	2,519,000
5.4	1.06	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.85	110,000
0.48	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	6,120,000
407.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	355	355	352.5	352.5	113,600
0.51	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.37	30,070,000
1.34	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.18	1.22	1.18	1.22	1,082,000
0.41	0.05	Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	450,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	3,430,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.4	649,000
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.46	0.5	0.46	0.46	1,570,000
18.5	10.25	Ayala Land Inc.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.5	7,222,400
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.28	4,684,000
3.1	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.36	2.36	667,000
4.5	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.35	4.4	4.35	4.4	189,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	440,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	1,000,000
2.3	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.3	128,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.79	0.77	0.78	29,510,000
0.165	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.135	0.14	5,990,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1,470,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.82	51,740,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	33,000,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	8,500,000
1.8	0.72	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	9,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	290,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.68	0.76	0.68	0.74	9,530,000
3.95	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.4	38,017,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	55,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.59	1,270,000
3.5	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	5,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	18	18	17.5	17.5	1,565,700
5.7	1.48	SM Development Corp.	5.4	5.6	5.1	5.2	1,412,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	2,641,700
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	100,000
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.195	1,300,000
1.74	0.3	Zeppelin Realty Holdings Inc.	1.18	1.3	1.18	1.3	79,000
		MEDIA					
29	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	28	28	27.5	27.5	134,400
1.2	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	50,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.08	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.66	911,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,230.00	1,235.00	1,215.00	1,215.00	106,330
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,540.00	2,550.00	2,540.00	2,540.00	247,920
7.9	3.05	Pldt Inc. Telephone Corp	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	957,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	6,100,000
7	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	6.2	7	6.2	6.4	1,218,000
7.1	2	IPVG Corp.	6.7	6.9	6.6	6.7	1,145,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	200,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	10,500,000
1.84	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	50,000
0.06	0.025	PhilWeb Corp. Inc.	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.047	30,100,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	50,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Abaviz Transport System Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	130,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.6	1,777,000
32	11.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	976,300
2.08	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.8	2.08	1.8	1.92	4,781,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.85	3.9	3.8	3.85	1,180,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.92	0.94	0.91	0.93	8,450,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	3.15	3.2	3.1	3.15	165,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
4.35	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	4.05	4.25	4.05	4.1	946,000
16	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	14.5	14.5	13.75	13.75	1,263,500
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	27	27	27	27	4,877,500
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	47,300,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	267,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.8	6	5.8	5.9	425,000
18.5	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	18.25	18.25	17.75	18	1,959,400
14.75	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	11.25	12	11.25	12	89,000
1.94	0.0602	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	1.88	1.94	1.88	1.92	25,338,000
0.42	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.31	71,470,000
0.47	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.35	15,700,000
0.037	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.035	0.037	0.034	0.034	1,746,300,000
0.039	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.039	0.039	0.037	0.037	601,300,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	1,747,400,000
5.9	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5	5.1	4.95	5	7,520,000
32	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	359,000
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.77	0.79	0.75	0.75	530,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.38	1.4	34,941,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	6,110,000
0.017	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	73,800,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	69,500,000
25.5	1.5	PNOC Exploration Corp. B	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	3,300
14.81	7.31	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	10	10	10	19,100
0.0182	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.015	802,000,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 3, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.735565	1.000000	47.6110
Japan	Yen	0.006124	0.008326	0.3964
United Kingdom	Pound	1.463553	1.989700	94.7316
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094037	0.127843	6.0867
Switzerland	Franc	0.606152	0.824063	39.2345
Canada	Dollar	0.663747	0.902364	42.9625
Singapore	Dollar	0.482464	0.655910	31.2285
Australia	Dollar	0.606551	0.824606	39.2603
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.951151	2.652590	126.2925
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.196135	0.266645	12.6952
Brunei	Dollar	0.480887	0.653766	31.1265
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000110	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.022598	0.030722	1.4627
UAE	Dirham	0.200268	0.272264	12.9628
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.359500	64.7272
Korea	Won	0.000791	0.001075	0.0512
China	Yuan**	0.095361	0.129643	6.1724
Argentina	Peso	0.238626	0.324412	15.4456
Brazil	Real	0.363188	0.493754	23.5081
Denmark	Kroner	0.134195	0.182438	8.6861
India	Rupee	0.017923	0.024366	1.1601
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215078	0.292398	13.9214
Mexico	New Peso	0.067403	0.091634	4.3628
New Zealand	Dollar	0.542852	0.738007	35.1373
Norway	Kroner	0.123101	0.167356	7.9680
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012138	0.016502	0.7857
South Africa	Rand	0.104394	0.141924	6.7571
Sweden	Kroner	0.109467	0.148821	7.0855
Syria	Pound	0.014170	0.019264	0.9172
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022089	0.030030	1.4298
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000343	0.000466	0.0222

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 2, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of April 27, 2007

Auditing firm sees PSEi hitting 4,000 in 2007

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE INDEX (PSEi) is likely to spike to 4,000 this year, buoyed by excess cash in the market, a strong peso, surging property sector and record low interest rates, said auditing firm Punongbayan and Araullo (P&A).

Following a property forum yesterday organized by the The Property Forum Phils. and P&A, P&A head of corporate finance Antonio Herbosa said the index may breach 3,400 in the next two to three months.

"If it breaks 3,447, the minimum (level of the index) is 4,000 this year," Herbosa said.

Herbosa noted that this target appeared to be at the conservative end of other brokers' more optimistic estimates of 5,000 to 10,000 by the end of the year.

Property companies are also likely to ride on the bullish trend this year as these companies raise new funds for projects to drive up earnings.

"The next story after telcos is property due to affordable property for the emerging middle market, affordable financing, property plays with a mining angle and resort and tourism as we position as the new Hawaii for China, Korea and Japan," Herbosa said in his presentation yesterday.

Investors are also closely watching possible risks to the market's bull run, which include the fate of the US and Chinese economies and how these would affect global financial markets.

Herbosa said that with regard to the May national elections, stock market investors have anticipated a peaceful conduct of the polls.

Herbosa earlier said he was bullish on tourism and resort projects, retirement homes and villages, and malls like "The Fort" in Makati and "MetroWalk" in Ortigas, which affirm what he dubbed as the "farm phenomenon" supporting the Philippine economy.

He explained that the Philippines as a farm has been a breeding ground for "knowledge-based workers" and is further characterized by the emergence of a middle class market.

The Philippines as a farm is also fueled by remittance income with growth of the economy also driven by consumer spending.

As a "farm", the Philippine economy has also shifted to the services sector from manufacturing to further fuel its growth, Herbosa said.

Businesses that cater to the "farm model" are those involved in fast food, strip malls and *tiangges* (flea markets), pre-paid cards, sachets, nursing schools and shorter degree courses, to name a few.

INSULAR LIFE — Wealth Builder and Wealth Secure

Investment Funds of Wealth Builder & Wealth Secure	UNIT PRICES (in Php)	
	April 30, 2007	April 23, 2007
Fixed Income Fund	1.275319	1.273770
Balanced Fund	1.405765	1.410404
Equity Fund	1.642459	1.655239

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.
The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

Court approves PETPlans' rehabilitation program

THE MAKATI REgional trial court yesterday gave pre-need firm PETPlans Inc. the go-ahead to proceed with its rehabilitation plan.

PETPlans said yesterday in a statement that under its approved rehabilitation plan, all pre-need contracts will be replaced with shares in a unified trust fund called the "Enhanced Value Plan" (EVP).

PETPlans' unified trust fund will be solely and independently managed by a competent, experienced and professional fund manager, the company said.

The total fund is now worth some P3.04 billion, up from P2.6 billion when PETPlans filed for rehabilitation in June last year.

Since PETPlans maintains a trust fund for each type of pre-need plan it has issued—educational, pension and life—the value of a pre-need plan will be equivalent to its pro-rata or proportionate share in the value of the particular trust fund created for it.

For example, the educational plan holders shall not share in the trust fund of the life plans nor the pension plans.

While the value of each plan will be computed in that way, the approved rehabilitation plan also provides that the three trust funds shall become one unified trust fund so it will realize better profits and save on administrative costs. The combined liquidity of the three trust funds shall also improve the capability of the unified trust fund to pay the benefits due the plan holders, the company said.

PETPlans president Lorenzo T. Ocampo said the approved plan has several advantages for plan holders.

"Unlike ordinary pre-need plans, the EVP will not lapse, has no pre-set installments and it is up to planholders to put in additional investments," he said.

PETPlans has stopped operating as a pre-need company because of "an inhospitable environment." *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

PRULINK — PRU LIFE U.K.

Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week May 01, 2007	Last Week Apr. 24, 2007
Bond Fund - Peso	1.61765	1.61462
Managed Fund - Peso	1.87445	1.87300
Growth Fund - Peso	1.77730	1.78259
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3890	1.3882

* Note These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

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Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHEASTERN PHILIPPINES
Obrero, Davao City

NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of the University of Southeastern Philippines formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHEASTERN PHILIPPINES is now open. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Commissioner Saturnino M. Ocampo, Jr.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must be a Natural-born Filipino citizen;
- A holder of an earned doctorate degree;
- Preferably not more than 61 years old upon assumption to office;
- Must have a proven leadership and managerial skills within the purview of the university's mission, vision and goals; and
- Must have at least five (5) years of administrative experience.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, the applicants are required to submit the following clearances:

- National Bureau of Investigation Clearance; and
- Ombudsman Clearance.

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with:

- Detailed Curriculum Vitae and authenticated/certified supporting documents;
- The applicant's proposed Vision and Thrust for the University;
- Result of Psychological Testing accomplished by an accredited Test Center; and
- Result of the Drug Testing conducted by a government accredited Test Center.

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit eight (8) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents on or before June 4, 2007 to:

MARLON RUBEN N. FABRICANTE
Executive Assistant IV
Office of Commissioner Saturnino M. Ocampo, Jr.
CHED, 5/F DAP Bldg., San Miguel Avenue,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 636-1690
Telefax No. (02) 636-1693

OR

DR. SUSAN F. LABUTAP
University/Board Secretary
University of Southeastern Philippines
Obrero, 8000 Davao City
Tel. No. (082) 225-4696
Telefax No. (082) 221-7737

(PDI - May 4, 9 & 12, 2007)

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Global warming and agriculture

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

IN THE PAST WEEK, WE EXPERIenced unusually high temperatures. As the earth continues to warm, the climate will change in ways that may seriously disrupt our lives unless we immediately change some of our practices.

The Union of Concerned Scientists states: "Among the most severe consequences of global warming are a faster rise in sea levels; more heat waves and droughts; more extreme weather events producing floods and property destruction; a greater potential for heat-related illnesses and deaths, and the wider spread of infectious diseases carried by insects and rodents in areas previously free from them."

The chart above from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows the global warming effects on agriculture:

Disastrous impact

Findings on staple food crops from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) indicate that for every 1°C increase in the tropics, yields decrease by as much as 10 percent.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a team of scientists that advises governments, estimates that the average global temperature in the tropics could climb by as much as 3°C by 2100.

COMMENTARY

The Independent Science Panel (ISP), a group of scientists from many disciplines, states: "There is now a consensus among experts in the field that, over the 21st century, the mean temperature of the earth will rise by no less than 2°C and possibly by as much as 5.8°C." This means a decrease of as much as 20-50 percent in crop yields. With an increase in population of 2.3 percent a year in the Philippines, this would be disastrous.

The Hadley Centre in the United Kingdom estimates that the rise might be as much as 8°C. This is because it took into account the effects of changes in vegetation. This happens through the destruction of rain forests, and changes in vegetation caused by global warming.

This factor is very important because it is an example of a harmful cycle that renews and strengthens itself. A rise in the earth's temperature causes changes in vegetation: For example, the loss of rain forests that hold water and carbon. This leads to a rise in temperature, which changes the vegetation even further.

Cynthia Rosenzweig and Daniel Hillel, in their report on "The Potential Impact of Climate Change in Agriculture and Food Supply," said studies found that vulnerability to climate change was greater in developing countries, which are located in warmer latitudes.

Recommendation

Having realized the imminent threat paused by global warming, the worst thing to do is take on a *bahala na* attitude and continue with our current practices. Instead, there should be a systematic study of what is to come, then launch a nationwide program led by the government to prevent or minimize the global warming dangers.

A part of this program is to shift from conventional way to sustainable agriculture. Conventional agriculture degrades the soil by leaving it bare, breaking up its tiny humus-containing aggregates, and failing to return plant residues. This has contributed to the atmospheric increase in carbon dioxide, methane,

GLOBAL/ B5

Shimao still keen on investing $2B in Taguig project

Open to competitive bidding

By Ronnel W. Domingo

REAL ESTATE GIANT SHANGHAI Shimao group of China is willing to go through a competitive bidding process for its planned project at the Bonifacio Global City and it prefers to do it alone than tie up with a local partner, Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila said yesterday.

Also yesterday, the Bases Conversion Development Authority said China's Shimao group had reaffirmed its commitment to invest $2 billion in Taguig.

In a briefing, Favila said he had advised the Shimao group about the law that prohibited the BCDA from directly entering a deal with a private sector group without a competitive bidding.

"The easiest way (for the Chinese firm) would be to tie up with Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.," he said.

However, Favila said, Shimao wanted a piece of property that the BCDA owned, and that it preferred to bid for a contract on its own.

"Shimao chair Hui Wing Mao (himself) reiterated his serious and firm interest (in such investment) during a recent meeting with BCDA officials in Hong Kong," said Narciso L. Abaya, BCDA president and chief executive.

Abaya said the first property that Shimao wanted to develop was a 7.4-hectare lot where high-end hotels, condominiums, offices and commercial complex would rise.

"Shimao is a world-class, fast paced developer that could finish a 900-room twin-tower luxury hotel in 18 months, as what they did with the Hyatt Hotel at the

SHIMAO/ B5

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CHEVROLET

Yehey! plans to go public this year

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PHILIPPINE SEARCH ENGINE Yehey! Corp. of holding firm iVantage Corp. is going public this year but through a route less traveled, called "listing by introduction."

iVantage president Edmundo Bunyi Jr. said this way of going public was done earlier by the Philippine Stock Exchange and exploration firm PetroEnergy Resources Corp.

Listing by introduction allows a company to be a member of the stock exchange without going through an initial public offering (IPO). It is for companies that do not need to raise additional capital immediately and which have a widely dispersed ownership of their shares.

Bunyi said iVantage held 99 percent of Yehey! while the remaining 1 percent was with minority stakeholders.

To pave the way for Yehey's listing, iVantage said in a disclosure it would declare a 5-percent property dividend amounting to P89.42 million to shareholders of record as of May 18, 2007. This is payable in the form of common shares of Yehey!

The property dividend will be taken from the company's unrestricted earnings worth P1.25 billion as of Dec. 31.

The move is in keeping with plans to bring Yehey! public by diversifying Yehey's ownership to qualify for the listing by introduction route.

After the dividend payout, iVantage will reduce its holdings to 63 percent in Yehey! while iVantage shareholders will hold 36 percent, Bunyi said.

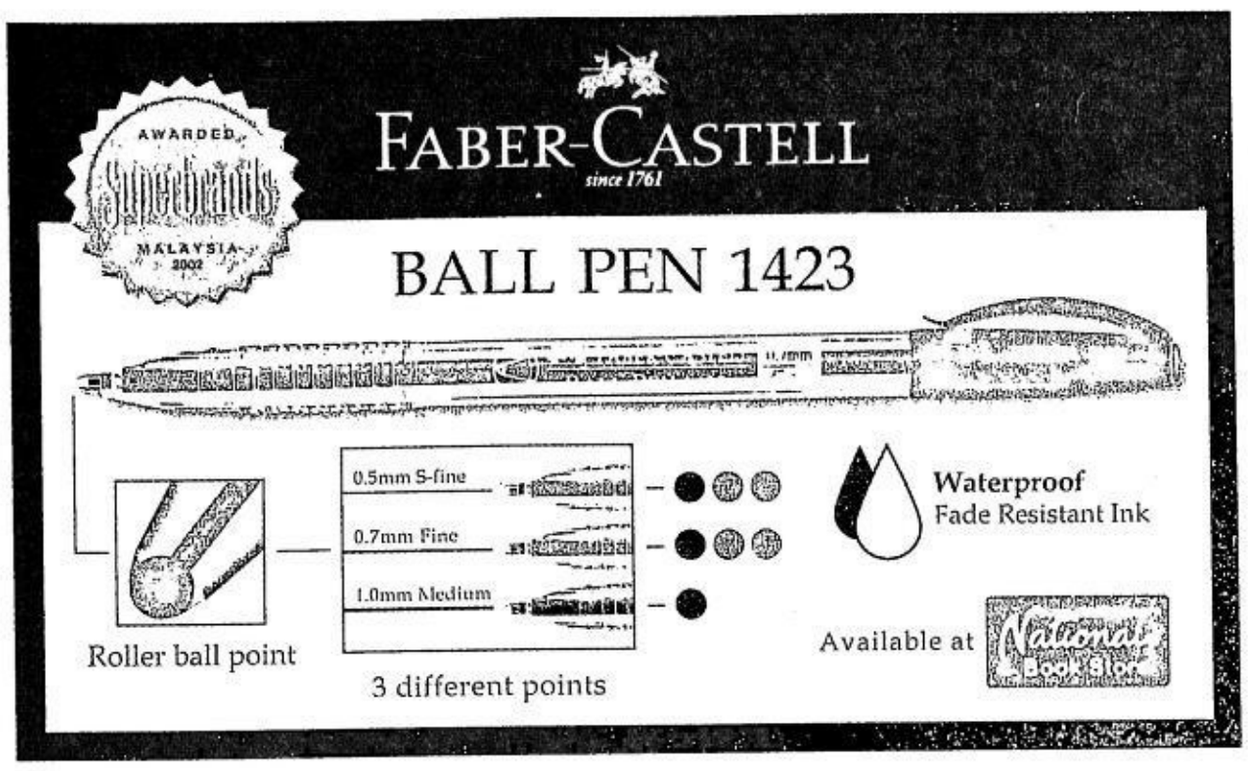
"The intention of an IPO is to raise money. In the case of Yehey!, the requirement is not urgent. Yehey! is well-capitalized to fund its operations," Bunyi said.

He said the planned listing would pave the way for capital building exercises to be undertaken in the future.

Bunyi also dispelled notions that Yehey! was not pursuing an IPO because it could not meet profitability requirements of the exchange.

He said that last year, Yehey! posted profit in the fourth quarter although the full-year financial report still showed losses. Actual figures, however, were still unavailable as of presstime.

"The losses in the past stemmed from the slow growth in market acceptance of the Internet as a marketing medium. However, Yehey! has repositioned itself from just being a media to become an online marketing company with an expanded business scope," Bunyi said.



Gov't set to borrow P325.6B next year

The bulk to come from domestic sources

By Michelle V. Remo

ALTHOUGH IT EXPECTS TO post a balanced budget next year, the government will still borrow P325.57 billion from creditors and government-securities investors next year to pay maturing debts.

Of the amount, P228.06 billion is expected to come from domestic sources through sale of treasury bills and bonds. About P97.5 billion (or $1.99 billion) will be raised through global bonds flotation or official development assistance.

The government's biggest sources of ODA are the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

This year's borrowing requirements were set at $2.466 billion in foreign loans and P260 billion in domestic loans.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the government would be able to borrow less next year, as it was expected to finally start posting a balanced budget.

Teves said the government was bent on keeping the budget deficit this year within the ceiling of P63 billion and balancing the budget by 2008 despite shortfalls in tax collection in the first quarter of this year.

Atlas, creditor OK debt conversion deal

INVESTMENT FUND CRESCENT Asian Special Opportunities Portfolio (Casop) said it had agreed to convert P604.57 million or $11.67 million in receivables from Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. into shares in the mining firm as part of a debt restructuring agreement.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Casop said it would exercise its conversion option under a debt restructuring agreement (DRA) executed with Atlas in May 2006.

The DRA allowed Casop to restructure the terms by which Atlas would repay its P604.6 million debt.

Under the DRA, Casop has the option to convert such debt into 60.457 million shares at the conversion price of P10 per share.

Atlas closed at P18 a share yesterday.

Atlas' board also approved the conversion and the corresponding issuance of shares to Casop, slated to be completed by the end of the month. *Elizabeth S. Lacson*

Insular Life premium income up 157% in Q1

INSULAR LIFE POSTED A 157-percent increase in first year premium income in the first quarter to P835 million from year-ago's P325 million.

Total premium for the quarter hit to P2 billion, up by 33 percent from P1.5 billion in 2006.

In a statement, the company said this was primarily driven by the strong demand for its investment-linked product, as well as for its limited-pay plans.

"We see the market preferences for financial protection evolving. The market today is very responsive to investment-linked life insurance products," said Insular Life's chair and CEO Vicente R. Ayllon.

Gross investment income in the first quarter was also up by 25 percent, from P604.1 million in 2006 to P753.4 million.

Shimao still keen ...

From page B4

Bund in Shanghai," he said.

BCDA chair Aloysius Santos said Shimao's entry would set a new standard in real estate development in the Philippines.

The China visit by Santos and Abaya was made upon the invitation of Hui, who came to Manila in March to sign a memorandum of understanding with the BCDA for a joint development of a sizable portion of land at the Global City.

"This is one of the biggest partnerships of the government for property development in 2007," Abaya said.

"This will further boost the asset disposition program of the BCDA, and enhance its revenue generating capability, translating to more funds for the AFP modernization program and other beneficiaries," he added.

Global warming ...

From page B4

and nitrogen-oxide compounds—the greenhouse gases.

Professor R. Lal of the Ohio State University School of Natural Resources states: "Restoration of degraded soil is a win-win situation. While improving productivity through enhancing soil quality, restoration of degraded soil can also sequester carbon and minimize the risk of the greenhouse effect."

At the farm level, changes in current practices can include several measures. Examples are the introduction of later-maturing crop varieties or species, switching cropping sequences, sowing earlier, adjusting the timing of field operations, conserving soil moisture through appropriate tillage methods, improving irrigation efficiency, and implementing proven effective technology.

Instead of an overdose in chemical fertilizers and pesticides harmful to both the land and the environment, a more balanced approach emphasizing organic and sustainable agriculture should be followed.

It is hoped that, as the planning of the 2008 budget begins with the newly elected senators and house representatives, the farmers and fisherfolk will unite with the Department of Agriculture in formulating a new program that specifically addresses global warming for the benefit of agriculture and the nation.

(The author is Agriwatch chair and former undersecretary of agriculture, and trade and industry. For inquiries, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112)

The Board of Directors, Management and Staff
of
PANAY ELECTRIC COMPANY, INC.
announce with deep sadness the demise of its
beloved Chairman

JOSE MARIA CACHO y ESCAY

Knight of St. Sylvester

(3 April 1931 – 2 May 2007)

We offer our deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers to his loved ones, wife **Marilou Ayesa**; children **Marirose, Luis Miguel** and **Sandra, Mari** and **Diane, Tono** and **Diane**, and **Edmund**; grandchildren **EJ, Mikel, Marcelo, Marco, Louie, Nikki, Enzo, Christian** and **Javi.**

His remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish, Magallanes Village. Novena Masses are at 7 p.m. daily.

A requiem Mass will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, 7th of April, in the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Dingle Family Farm School would be highly appreciated.

"It's hard. Yes, I know. But, forward! No one receives the reward – and what a reward! – except those who fight bravely."
"If Love, even human love, gives so many consolations here, what will Love be like in heaven?"
– St. Josemaría Escrivá

As she begins her journey to eternal life, we send off...

Minerva P. Franco

(Menchi and Manang to friends and family)

With a celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Today, May 4, 4 p.m. at the
Product Development and Design Center
of the Philippines,
CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

ATTY. RAUL ABIGANIA ALON

Peacefully joined his Creator on April 26, 2007.

His bereaved family and relatives request you to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie at there residence in San Pedro Norte, Vigan City, Ilocos Sur. Interment will be on Saturday, May 5, 2007 at Vigan Memorial Park after the 9 a.m. Mass.

VICENTE SALARIOSA

...passed away in the grace of our Lord on April 29, 2007 at the age of 73

His bereaved wife **Erlinda Salariosa**; children **Ariel, Armand, Alona, Allan, Alvin, Alelie**; other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Chapel 3, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Interment will be on May 5, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park at 9:00 a.m. after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

Two years
of triumph in the presence of our Lord

ANGELES
"Jun"
SAÑEZ
of Imus, Cavite
May 4, 2005

Readers are requested to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

CLASSIFIEDS

Form 12 [Rule 9 (9)]
NOTICE BY ADVERTISEMENT

Court File No. ..F 26929..
Court Location ....SURREY..

In the Provincial Court of British Columbia

To **MARIA AGNES FERNANDEZ:**

KEVIN KENPIN LEE is applying to the Provincial Court for an order of custody and guardianship of your daughter.

The Court has ordered that the application be served on you by way of this advertisement.

To respond to the application you must:

file a reply form within 30 days in the court registry at 14340 – 57th Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V3X 1B2

If you do not respond, the Court may make an order in your absence.

You may obtain forms or view documents in your case at the court registry at the above address. Refer to court file number F 26929.

(PDI–May 4, 2007)

NOTICE OF EXTRAJUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF ESTATE

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late SOLEDAD J. RODRIGUEZ, who upon her death on January 10, 1991, was resident of No. 60 Matimtiman St., Teachers Village, Quezon City, consisting of one-half (1/2 individual share of real property situated in Kamuning, Quezon City and covered by TCT No. RT 15212 (104995) was settled extrajudicially and distributed to her sole and only heirs, SPS. **JUAN V. RODRIGUEZ** and **JULIANA C. RODRIGUEZ**, who are residents of 60 Matimtiman St., Teachers Village (East), Quezon City, by means of a certain public document executed by the latter on February 27, 1978, and ratified before Renato D. Torres, Notary Public in and for Makati, Rizal, as per Doc. No. 146, Page No. 31, Book No. III, Series of 1978, of his Notarial Register.

(PDI – April 20, 27 & May 4, 2007)

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Notice is given that Demand Draft No. 001372 in the amount of US$7,500 under the name of RIVKIN RADLER LLP was lost since February 19, 2007.

(PDI - May 4-10, 2007)

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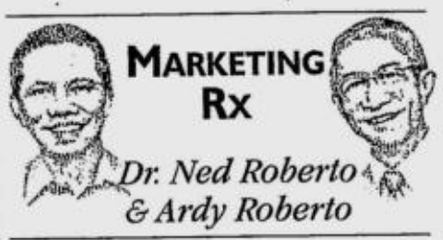
'Can we outsource our marketing?'



Q: WE STARTED A COMPANY PRODUCing a cosmetic product. All of us have technical background like chemical engineering, biology, medical science, dermatology, and pharmacology. None of us have had any training or experience in marketing or sales. Can we outsource marketing to an outside marketing firm or agency?

A: Yes of course. You can outsource and succeed. Your benchmark and model is Nike, a company founded and managed by foot experts and scientists, and who were former track and field champion runners. The group focused on designing and testing the most innovative sports footwear. Then, when they were ready to produce and market, they decided to outsource everything and not only marketing. Everything: marketing, distribution and sales, production, accounting and finance, HRD, even corporate planning. They concentrated on their "core competence," namely, designing and developing the best running, walking sports footwear.

In the Philippines, we now have reputable and respectable groups of marketing experts to whom you can reliably outsource your marketing especially the marketing of a new product intros. Let us just mention a few of them and what each of them is known for.

First is Fred Rodriguez's marketing team. Fred was the J&J Philippines president who turned around J&J Philippines during his watch and made it the fastest growing and most profitable J&J affiliate in the world. When he retired, Unilab got Fred who brought his marketing team to manage the market launch of pH Care and made it succeed in attaining an unprecedented first year entry market share of 52 percent. That share figure grabbed on the very first year market leadership from Lactacyd, a dominant feminine wash market leader for many years. The marketing services of Fred's team can include taking care of the very start of product development for a new product, its consumer pretesting, its market and sales entry planning, its commercial launch, its maintenance, and then its turnover to your own marketing team after an agreed period of time.

We should also mention the team of Ed Zaragoza that is doing relatively the same thing. Before he retired, Ed was the president of Warner-Lambert in Thailand and then in Malaysia. His team is now managing the new product entries of a large sugar-producing company. There's also the team of Alex Castillo. Before he retired about two years ago, Alex was CEO of Del Monte and was responsible for the successful launching of a good number of Del Monte new products like the Del Monte Spaghetti and the Del Monte canned juices.

The distinct advantage of outsourcing your new product marketing to experts like Fred, Ed and Alex is the time advantage. To get your new product immediately and aggressively participating in the market, you don't have to wait until your own marketing team have been properly trained in new product marketing and have reached the maturity stage of their learning curve. The outsourced marketing team does this in month No. 1 for you. They are also the learning base of your own marketing team who you can second to the outsourced team for their training and learning of the necessary marketing technology.

There are many other marketing consultants or groups who can do the same thing for you. Start asking around and networking. (For starters, you can join the Philippine Marketing Association and attend their monthly meetings.) Identify your top five potential marketing partners. Then request for a credential presentation from these marketing groups (the same way companies ask ad agencies to present when they discuss their advertising requirements.) This marketing outsourcing is actually a worldwide trend in the HRD of marketing experts. They are no longer hired as individuals only but as a group or team as well.

Keep your questions coming! Send them to us at MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net. God bless!

Empowering women through abaca weaving

THE SMALL TOWN OF TIWI IN Albay is mostly known for its geothermal power operations and ceramics industry, but a women's group is also making inroads at harnessing another indigenous resource for which the region is known: The abaca fiber.

The United Stakeholders Working to Achieve Growth, (Uswag) Inc., composed of 100 women from Barangay Lourdes, is a community of weavers using the traditional skills of handloom weaving and crocheting to create beautiful products out of abaca fiber.

The group is formed with the assistance the Department of Trade in Industry, the Tiwi municipal government and geothermal steam developer Unocal Philippines Inc. The project was initiated to provide livelihood opportunities to the women, who are mostly farmers' wives and some out-of-school youths. The women are now able to utilize their idle time productively, helping augment their family income and gaining new skills like crocheting and *sinamay*-weaving.

In addition to providing livelihood and skills-building opportunities, the formation of the Uswag had also helped enhance camaraderie in the community and create a sense of empowerment among the members. "It inspires me to see how they have transformed from passive to active participants of the community," noted Norma Caayao, Unocal Philippines' Senior Operations Community Liaison Officer, who led the project. "After the Program Implementation Review facilitated by DTI Albay, Uswag initiated organizational changes to have more defined members' roles, responsibilities and accountability—a step towards a more strengthened organization, enabling them to work on quality and respond to market and product trends."

Projects such as the Uswag effort are also helping to keep the traditional abaca cottage industry alive in the Bicol region, which has been outstripped by nearby Eastern Visayas as the top abaca producer in the country.

The abaca fiber is indigenous to the Philippines and is known internationally as "Manila hemp." It has a variety of uses such as for cordage, ropes or twines; pulp or specialty papers; fibercrafts; or textiles. The Uswag group produces various forms of abaca weavings, which are then sold to an exporter and used as raw materials for products such as bags, placemats, slippers, flowers, decors and clothes. The group also supplies the local market, with the group making weekly deliveries of products intended for trading in Legazpi City.

Uswag, which means "growth" in Bicolano, has lived up to its name, achieving a 25-percent increase in its working capital since the start of its operation in March 2006. It is currently expanding its range of products and recruiting additional members from other barangays. Uswag president Perlita Base, who is also the wife of Lourdes barangay captain, says that she is proud of the diligent members and the gains that the group has achieved. "In a span of one year, Uswag have achieved good earnings for the organization and for the members."

Those willing to take risks end up unlocking the marketing code

SHE NEVER THOUGHT THERE was a "career" in advertising and now she is one of the most influential figures in the industry.

Graduating from Miriam College (formerly Maryknoll College) with a degree in business administration, Maria Theresa Villanueva, or Matec to people close to her, never thought she would make it big someday.

An average student, she says she would just work hard to get things done. She never really had a plan for her future. Unlike most people who map out their lives in their early 20s, she says she would just go with the flow and make sure that she enjoys her learning process.

But because of her innate advertising skills, she has become one of the most respected people in the industry.

Starting as an account executive, she has risen from the ranks and is not chair and chief executive officer of Publicis Manila.

"I got into advertising by accident," Villanueva says. "When I found it, I just loved it so much, I did not shift careers anymore."

According to Villanueva, she did not seek a job in advertising. She worked as a teacher, then for a travel agency and later on for the government.

The doors in advertising opened for her when the special projects firm owned by Tony Mercado, where she was working, closed down. Mercado wanted to keep her so he asked Villanueva if she wanted to join Basic Advertising as account executive. Without so much hesitation, she said yes.

Although her background was business administration, Villanueva did not really have a hard time adjusting herself to the advertising world. However, her foundation would later on prove to play a dominant side on her.

MARIA THERESE Villanueva

While others would look on the aesthetics as the basis of a good commercial, she would be firm on waiting for the business effect to prove that her campaign was effective.

"Commercials aren't great if it doesn't meet the business results desired," Villanueva says. "I am just lucky to be part of a team where the business results are just excellent."

However, Villanueva noticed that the problem with Filipinos is that they expect advertising agencies to come out with the boldest and the bravest concepts, but when they were presented cutting-edge ideas, they become adamant to put their money at stake by doing something that is totally unfamiliar to consumers. They want to play it safe so they stick to the traditional.

"History can only tell you that only those who are brave enough to take risks are the only ones who end up unlocking the marketing code," Villanueva says.

Sometimes, though, businessmen who were once bold enough to embrace an out-of-the-box concept would later on go back to their "conservative" way of marketing. Perhaps, this is because they are afraid to lose their grounding so they just maintain whatever concept they have.

"This is why the best advertising agency for me is that which can strike a balance between something fresh and something familiar," Villanueva says.

Because of her encompassing experience, she was invited by the Philippine Marketing Association, the country's premier marketing organization, to speak on the 38th National Marketing Conference slated on the 23rd to the 24th of May 2007 at the Hotel Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Pasay City.

With the theme, "Unlocking the Marketing Code," Matec Villanueva along other marketing experts coming from different fields will be speaking on how both budding and established marketing professionals may be able to decode the secrets in marketing and help break grounds for their respective companies.

For more information call 634-4890 or 634-5722.

In RP, smart card soon to replace coin purse

Brand new electronic payment system uses contactless card technology

By Raquel P. Gomez

SOON THE COMMUTING PUBLIC WILL have no use for the coin purse to keep their loose change in because it will be replaced by the smart card—an electronic wallet that can be used to pay anything, from a pack of cigarettes in a convenience store to a ride in the LRT.

Functioning like a debit card which can be reloaded with denominations from as low as P10 to a thousand pesos, Versacard is a brand new electronic payment system using contactless card technology in the Philippines.

First Versatile Smartcard Solution Corp. partnered with ERG Group of Australia, AP Trans of Belgium, and Sony Japan to bring the smart card to the country.

About half a million smart cards will be rolled out by the end of August, according to Joseph Issifu, president of First Versatile Smartcard. He said the company is currently finalizing talks with the LRTA, a fast-food chain, and a convenience store where the smart card will have its initial run.

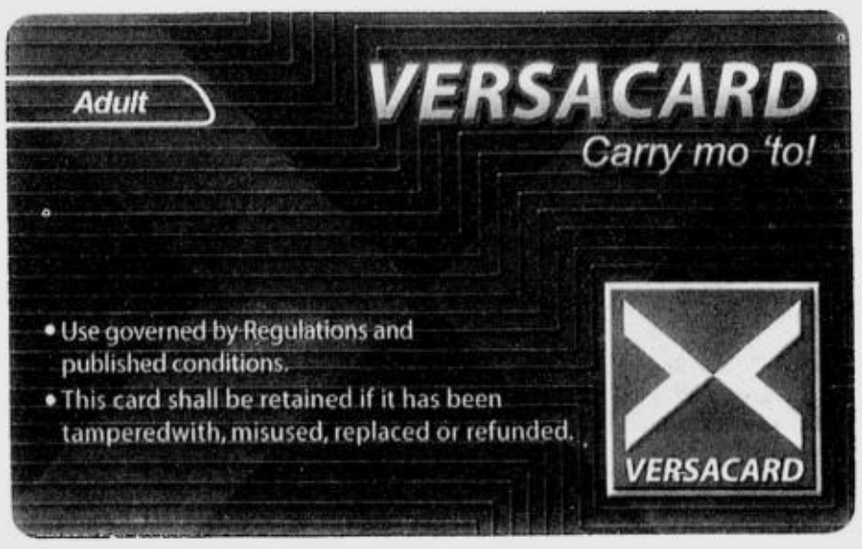
Issifu said they have already spent around US$20 million for the initial infrastructure of the project that they hope will become as popular as the smart cards EZlink and Octopus used in the railway systems of Singapore and Hong Kong.

According to Octopus Cards Ltd., operator of the Octopus card system, there are currently over 14 million cards in circulation in Hong Kong, used by 95 percent of the population, generating over 10 million daily transactions worth about HK$29 billion (US$3.7 billion) a year.

A smart card looks like a credit card or an ATM card, but embedded within the card is a microprocessor or chip that engages an electronic transaction via a "contactless" positioning of the card on top of a card reader. Data between the smart card and reader is transferred with the use of radio frequency technology (RFID).

Credit cards and ATM cards, on the other hand, use a magnetic stripe that's read by a card reader after the card is swiped.

Another difference is that the smart card's chip, which can be embedded in a wristwatch or a cell phone, can store large amounts of information and can process multiple applications.



Introduced in Europe over a decade ago, smart cards were initially used as a stored value tool for pay phones to reduce theft. Very soon its popularity in Europe reached a peak, with people using them extensively in the health insurance and banking industries.

Aside from faster transaction and convenience, smart cards are secure. They provide tamper-proof storage of user and account identities. To guard against counterfeiting, they also employ synthetic DNA technology that marks each card with a particular signature.

Issifu said the company will produce two types of smart cards. Personalized smart cards will carry the owner's identity, can be stored with huge amounts and be tracked, while the amount carried is insured. Anonymous smart cards can be loaded up to P2,000.

The smart cards can be reloaded in convenience stores, reloading counters or ticket vending machines in train stations, and even through cell phones. Issifu said that for the first year of the card's introduction, they are targeting seven million users of the smart card. About 4,000 card readers will be installed in different train stations, convenient stores as well as *sari sari* stores.

"There are many cards out there used for payment, but most of them are bank related," said Issifu. "We're targeting the nonbanking community or the *masa*, because not everybody has a bank account.

"The good thing about the smart card is that the user virtually pays nothing on the transaction he does with the card."

Takenaka warned on Naia 3 repairs

By Riza T. Olchodnra

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Authority (Miaa) has reiterated its call for Japanese civil works contractor Takenaka Corp. to finish repairs at the long-delayed Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 (Naia 3).

Miaa and Takenaka met last Monday to determine which company would undertake the repairs.

Takenaka emerged from the meeting asking to further discuss the issues.

Miaa, on the other hand, has maintained its view that Takenaka should shoulder the cost of repair because the project was still under warranty.

Miaa said yesterday in a statement that if Takenaka finds the experts' documented evaluation inadequate, the contractor should do its own study and submit its findings.

Naia 3's operation has been stalled because the pre-opening inspections by TCGI Engineers Inc. and the Ove Arup & Partners HK Ltd. last year found that the Naia 3 had structural defects.

The experts said the facility may not stand an intensity-six earthquake and recommended repair work on the beams, girders and post-tension slabs, as well as columns and piles.

Miaa general manager Alfonso Cusi said in an earlier interview that the mothballing of the Naia 3 has been weighing on its expenses, as the airport authority has been spending an average of P1 million a month on electricity alone since it gained stewardship of Naia 3 in 2004.

He said the stalled operation of Naia 3 has also prevented Miaa from making full use of Naia 2, which was designed and built to service domestic flights.

Naia 1, meanwhile, would specialize in servicing chartered and freight aircraft if its international flight operations are transferred to Naia 3.

Metrobank to forge deal with real estate companies

METROBANK, THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST bank in assets, is set to enter into a joint-venture agreement with real property developers to help sell its nonperforming real estate assets.

Bernardito Lapuz, senior vice president for risk management, said that under the proposed agreement, Metrobank will provide the undeveloped real property, while the real estate firms will develop and market the assets.

The bank and the developers will have to agree on the sharing of income, Lapuz said.

The bank executive said engaging in more creative ways of disposing its idle real estate assets was part of its program to beef up its income for 2007.

The bank said its net income in 2006 hit P5.53 billion, boosted partly by the sale of P9.93 billion worth of nonperforming assets.

In a disclosure to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Metrobank reported that its net income in the first quarter of this year reached P1.62 billion, up 30.11 percent from P1.25 billion posted in the same period a year ago.

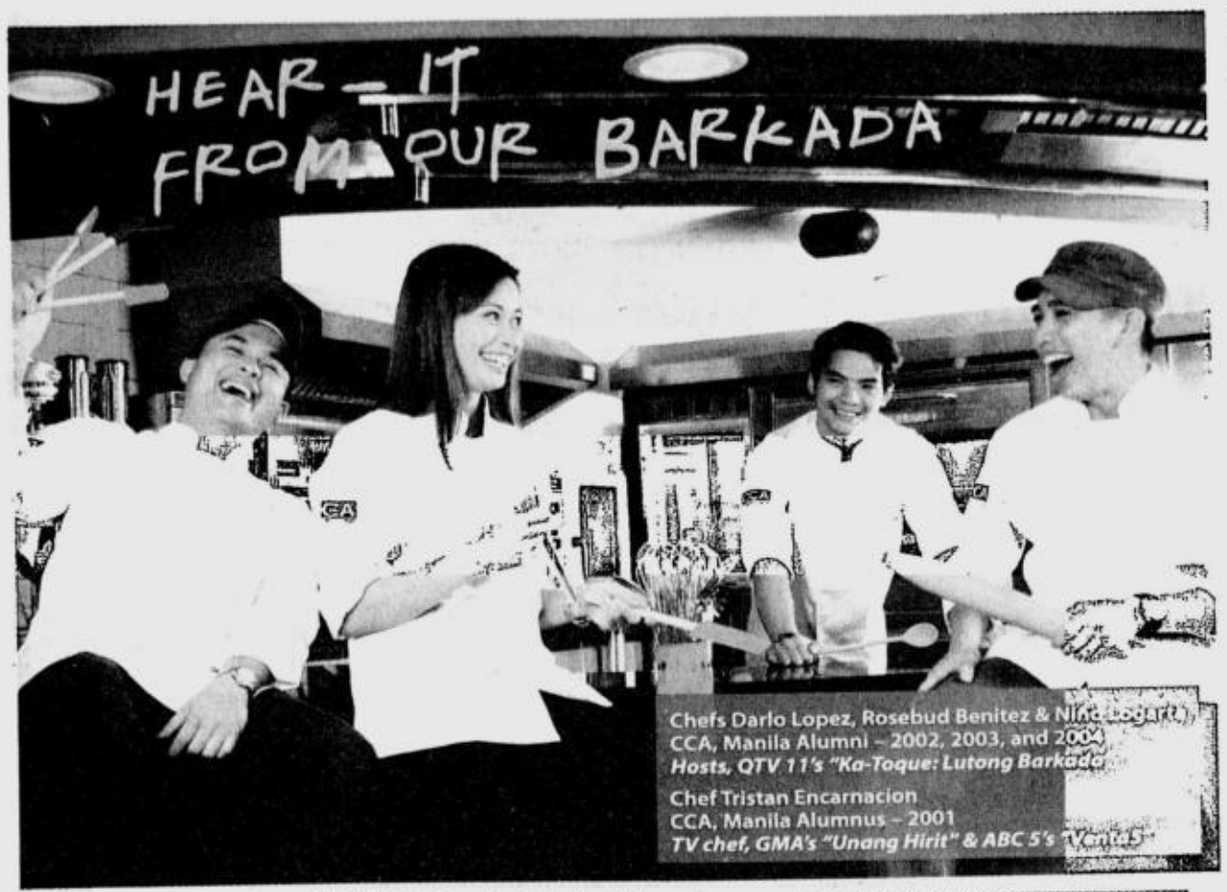
Metrobank said the bank's first-quarter performance was partly due to lower interest rates, which cut interest expense by 15.11 percent year-on-year.

The bank executive likewise said the bank engaged in a more aggressive marketing of its low-cost deposits and had an improved deposit mix.

Metrobank said its net interest income in the first quarter reached P3.61 billion, up 5.39 percent from the P3.43 billion in the same period a year ago.

Income from other sources, including securities trading by the treasury department and disposal of assets such as real property, inched up by 14.5 percent year-on-year to P3.15 billion.

The bank also recently announced the other day that it was set to distribute P1.08 billion in dividends to its shareholders. *Michelle V. Remo*



Chefs Darlo Lopez, Rosebud Benitez & Niño Laurel
CCA, Manila Alumni – 2002, 2003, and 2004
Hosts, QTV 11's "Ka-Toque: Lutong Barkada"

Chef Tristan Encarnacion
CCA, Manila Alumnus – 2001
TV chef, GMA's "Unang Hirit" & ABC 5's "Yan Si"

In an exclusive interview with TV chefs Rosebud, Darlo, Niño and Tristan, when asked about what CCA, Manila provided them:

Rosebud: "...the best curriculum which I needed to hone my craft..."

Darlo: "...skills and knowledge to start a catering business at age 17..."

Niño: "...discipline to achieve my goal to be a culinarian..."

Tristan: "...opportunities, directions in life, and the heart. The time of my life!"

At CCA, Manila, we'll make sure you're equipped with fresh and innovative ideas as you face the stage of life.

Pioneer. Professional. Leader. This is CCA, Manila. Conquering the Global Foodscape.

Application and enrollment are on going for the opening of classes in June and August 2007:

Culinary Arts & Technology Management (1 to 2 years)
Baking-Pastry Arts & Technology Management (1 to 2 years)

For schedules of entrance exams and other details, please call 426-4840 and look for Ms. Cherrie Bautista or Ms. Jonarry Cruz.

af Alliance française
Rendez-vous au CCA, Manille!
(See you at CCA, Manila!)

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10 Years of Culinary Education Leadership
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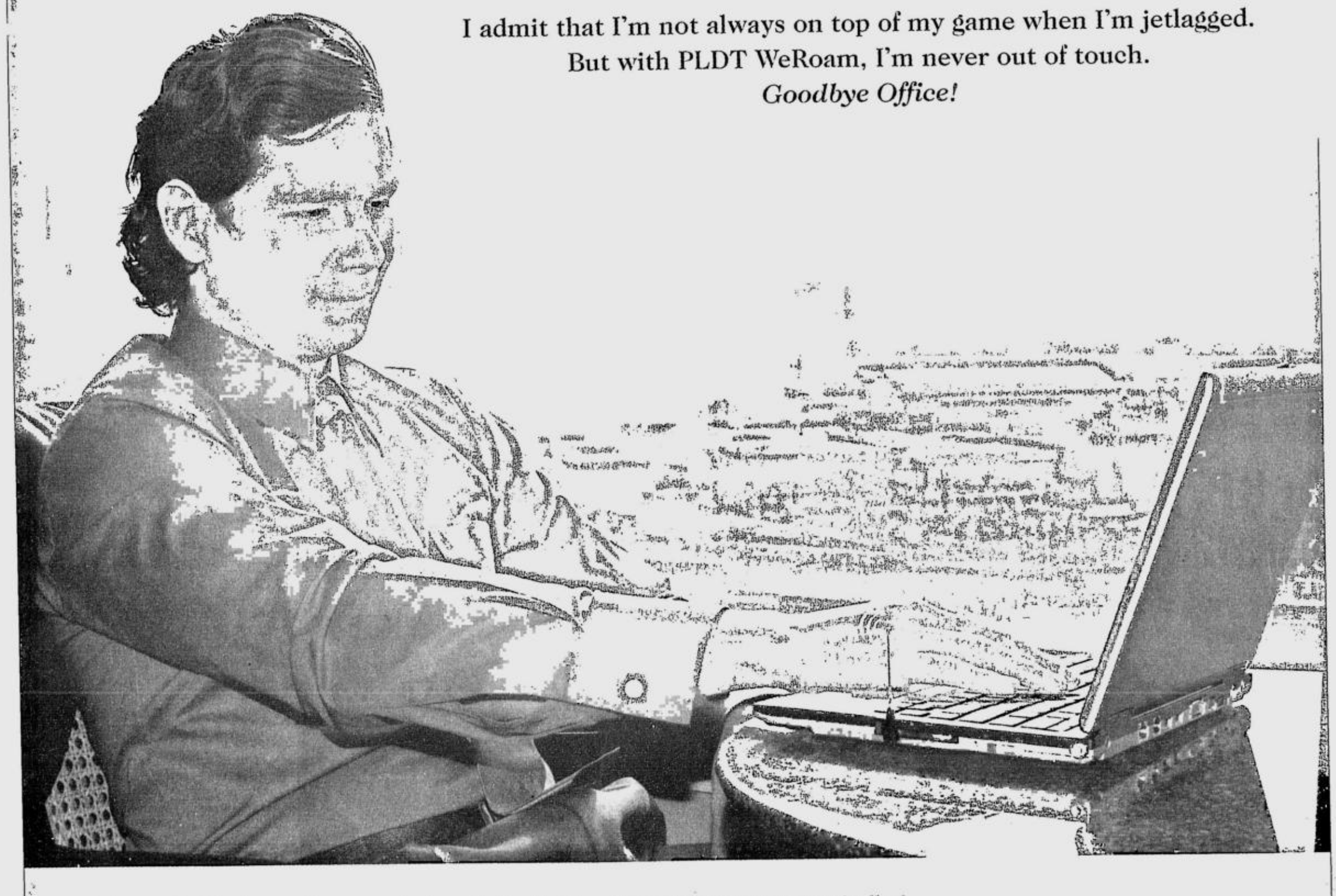
Tel. 426-4840 to 41
Fax. 426-4836
Email. marketing@cca-manila.com
Website. www.cca-manila.com

PHOTO TAKEN AT SERENDIPITY LOUNGE, DISCOVERY SUITES

I admit that I'm not always on top of my game when I'm jetlagged.
But with PLDT WeRoam, I'm never out of touch.
Goodbye Office!



Let's face it, the life of a traveling executive is pretty hectic. When I'm on a business trip, I can't afford to lose touch with company headquarters. That's why I never leave the office without my PLDT WeRoam.

Anywhere I am, as long as I get a WiFi, 3G/HSDPA or GPRS/EDGE signal, I'll get to the Internet or my company's LAN on my laptop, thanks to PLDT WeRoam's vast wireless broadband network.

Goodbye office! With PLDT WeRoam,.I can bring business wherever I go. Now is the best time to see what PLDT WeRoam can also do for you.

PLDT WeROAM
Goodbye, office.
www.pldtweroam.com

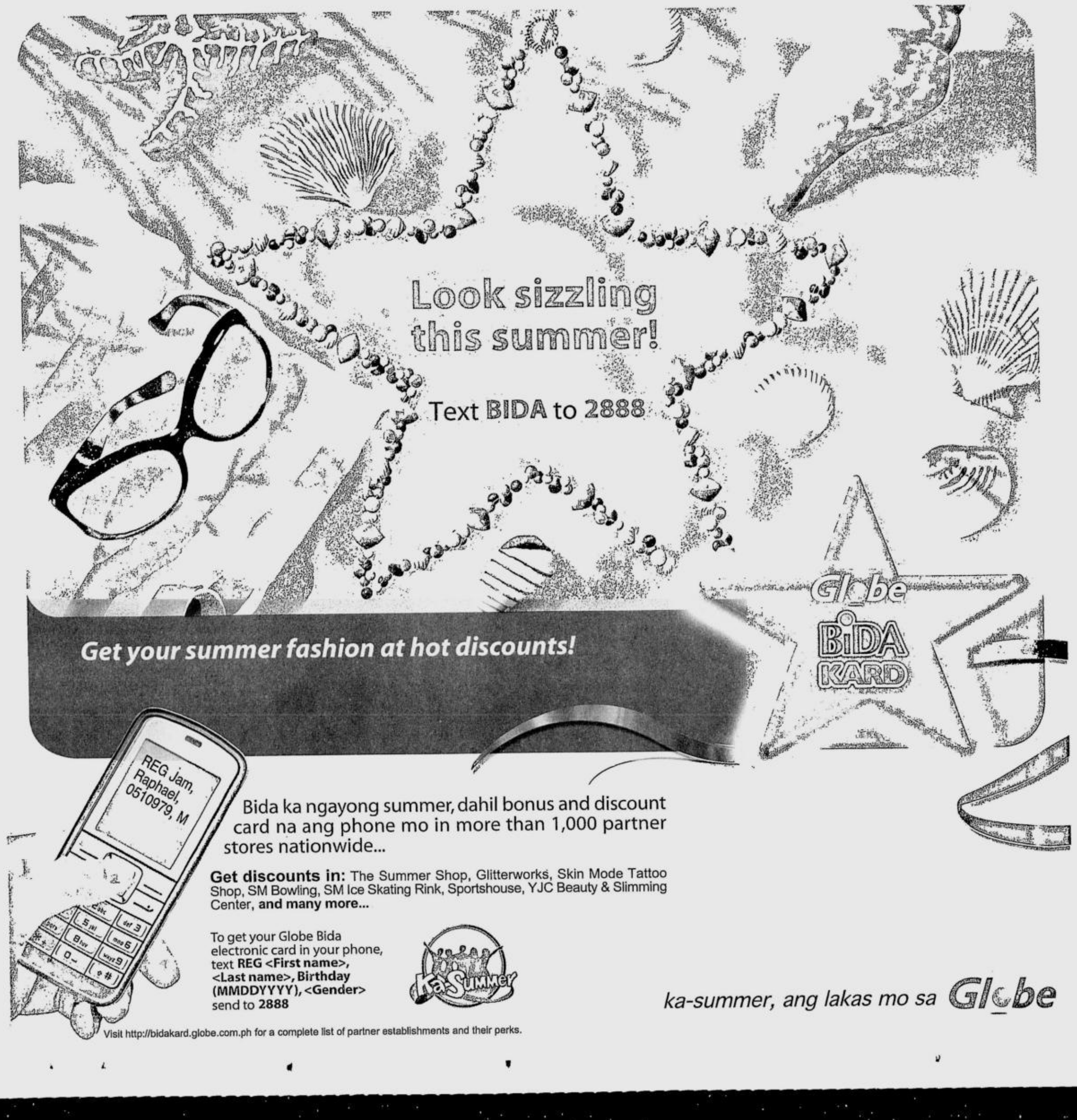
Contributing Editors
Apples Abdrin-Sadhwani
and Jenni Epperson

Editor Chelo Banal Formoso

LIFESTYLE

Free to move

On Him: The North Face logo beanie in canopy green, long-sleeve vaporick waterblue top, olive green pants and Gore-tex technology shoes; Columbia Sportswear Co. men's ballard notch plaid shirt in sprig; Timbuk2 classic messenger bag in olive chartreuse, available at The Travel Club.
On Her: Columbia Sportswear Co. women's bella luna jacket luminata, and omni-dry highland long-sleeve blue frost; The North Face orbit shades, agion shoes, and light-blue knapsack



Modern Mess

Columbia Sportswear Co. interchange core orange jacket and wanderlust apricot jacket (worn as a skirt); Chocolate Clothing teardrop-print tube dress; Mphosis yellow top; Columbia Sportswear Co. Ace Progrès lime-green bag

THE CITY HEAT IS GETTING quite unbearable these days. Each day is reportedly hotter than the previous one and temperatures are soaring up to 38°. Now, more than ever, is the perfect time to head out to the cool mountainous, not to mention, extremely picturesque, regions of the Philippines.

Thanks to The Travel Club, the INQUIRER Fashion team headed out to Sagada, a quaint town in the Mountain Province region, to shoot a couple of fashion editorials. The exotic little locale, which is near the provincial capital of Bontoc, is around 12 hours away from Manila and about six to eight hours away from Baguio by land, or rather, by extremely curvy, sometimes bumpy roads.

The long drive is well worth it, though, as Sagada truly is a jewel of a place with a lot to offer (well, except five-star accommodations and the like). One can go trekking in Echo Valley to see the hanging coffins, or to Bomod-ok Falls for sightseeing, or caving in Sumaguing-Latipan, supposedly the Philippines' deepest cave. Those not in the mood to exert any physical effort can also just chill out and eat to their heart's content in places like Yoghurt House and Log Cabin Café.

Experienced adventure travelers may consider the trip a walk in the park, so to speak, but to urbanites like the members of the INQUIRER Fashion Team—except perhaps for photographer Bahaghari who frequents the area—it was a true-to-life adventure.

Of course, adventure travel requires the right kind of gear. So-called flashpackers, a new breed of backpackers described by National Geographic as "those who seek the serendipity of independent travel without being confined to a bare-bones budget," will have to give up designer goodies momentarily. Louis Vuitton bags and Tod's loafers simply have no place in this rough and rugged land. Neither do Prada platforms or Gucci stilettos. The trip calls for comfortable, durable attire and gear that can stand the elements; shield from the searing heat; repel cold mountain water; carry and protect essentials; and keep feet in good shape, in spite of the rocky terrain.

Roel Chan, The Travel Club marketing communications manager, says there are several factors to consider when choosing adventure-travel gear. First, Chan stresses the importance of choosing lightweight gear. "You'll be carrying your gear most of the time and when you transfer from vehicle to vehicle so it's best to choose something light," states Chan.

Second, he encourages the use of multifunctional gear. "It's practical to choose items that have several uses or functions. Pockets, for instance, are very helpful, as you can stash away things conveniently. Then special features like rain covers, for one, are also important," he adds.

Of course, durability should always be a given. Meanwhile hydration and protection from the sun's rays should also be taken into consideration. "You should use clothing with UPF or Ultraviolet Protection Factor and tote around Nalgene water bottles or hydration bladders," advises Chan.

Apparently, the UPF rating system is similar to the SPF system used for sunscreens. UPF measures the UV protection provided by fabrics. For example, a top with UPF 50 will only allow 1/50th or what is equivalent to 98 percent of UV radiation that hits the garment to pass through.

"Gore-tex rubber shoes that are waterproof, and are not necessarily for trekking or hiking are also practical for such trips," adds Chan.

The best part about all this is that one need not give up one's sense of fashion while dressing the part of adventurer. As you'll see from INQUIRER Fashion's editorial, there is a way to marry style and substance. But as always, don't take things too literally. Coifed hair, a made up face and stylized gear might not hold up in the mountains.

Rather, gather inspiration from all this and take a walk on the wild side, as you prepare for your very own adventure.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

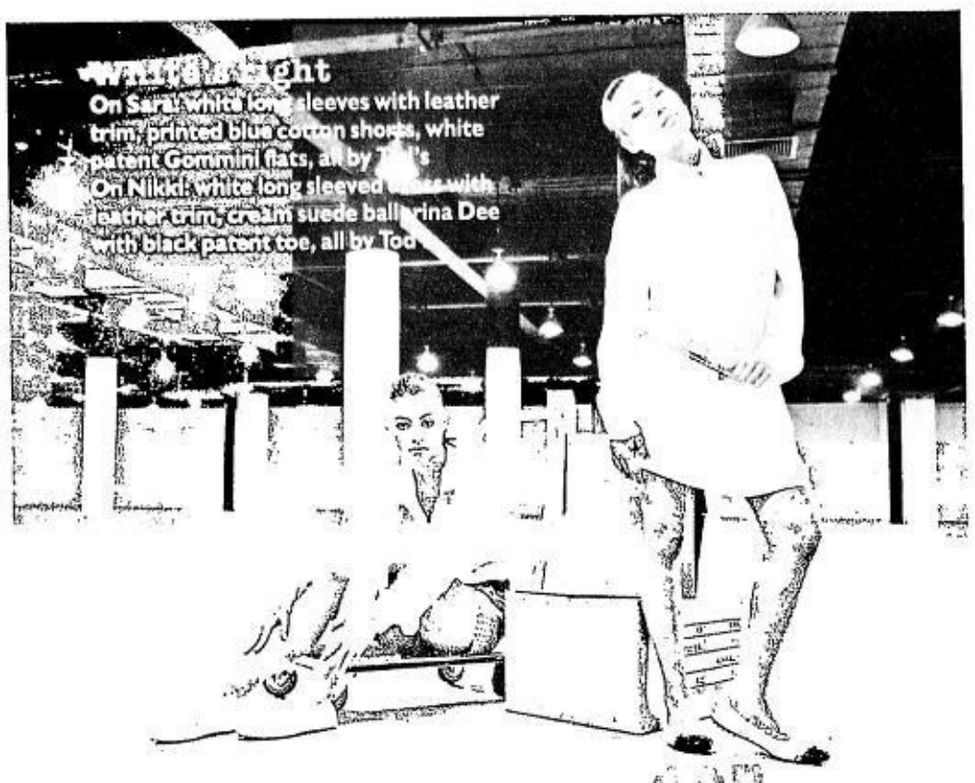
Why mountain fashion? Because it's up there

ON HIM: Columbia Sportswear Co. men's granite jungle jacket; blue shorts and trout runner hat; Sanuk shoes, available at Rustan's Makati and Kickers; Victorinox trek pack plus backpack; Eagle Creek olive-green gray bag, both bags available at The Travel Club.
On Her: Columbia Sportswear Co. women's ruby ridge corduroy jacket; Mphosis yellow dress; Sanuk slippers, available at Rustan's Makati and Kickers; Samsonite carrying bag aqua-blue knapsack, and American Tourister woman brown bag, both available at the Travel Club

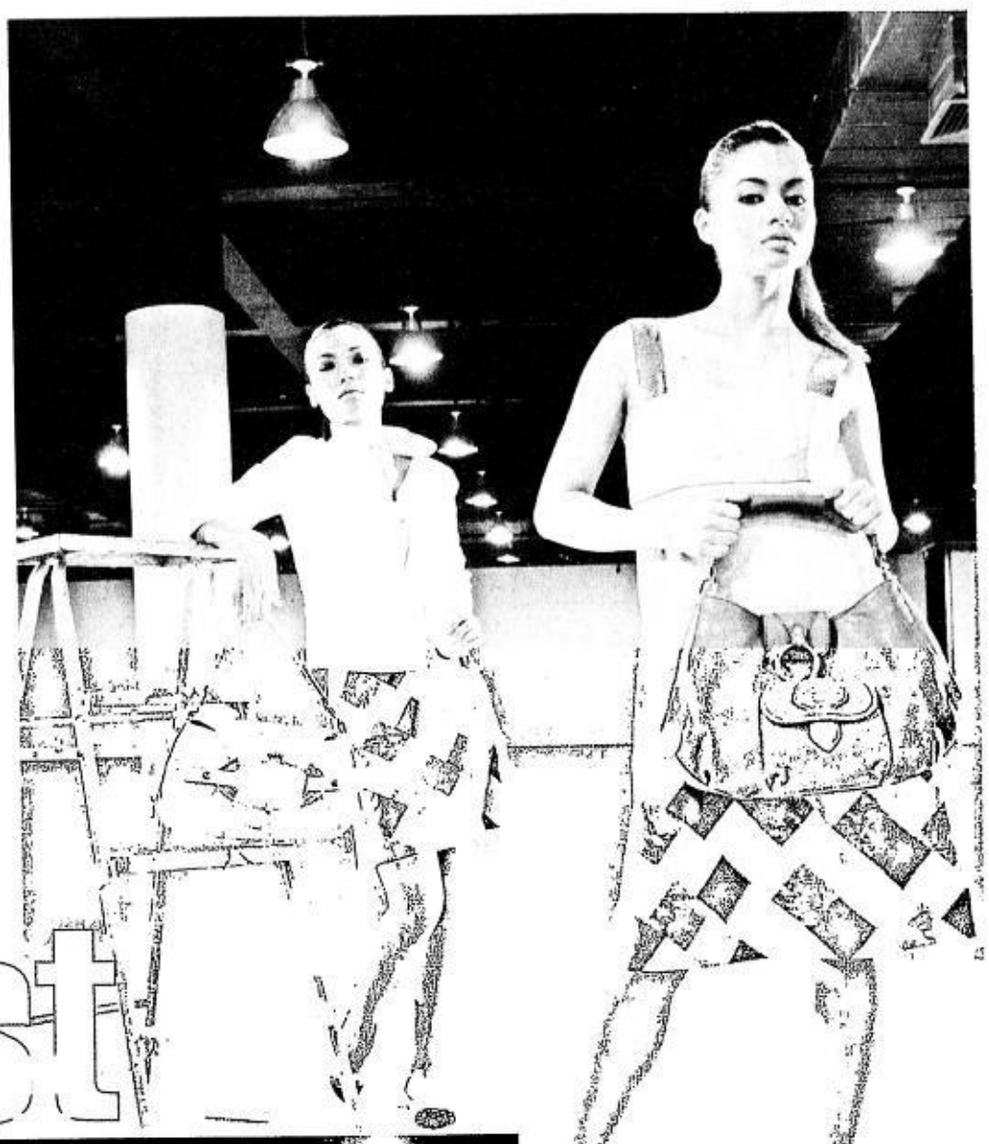
Photography Bahaghari (www.lightstalkers.org/bahaghari)
Styling Millet V. Arzaga
Hair and makeup Lourd Ramos assisted by Luisa Caballa of Emphasis Salon
Using Red Earth Cosmetics
Models Lia Andrea Ramos and Kristopher Melendres

Market day
Columbia Sportswear Co. women's soft drop, soft shell red-violet jacket; The North Face black shades; Jansport bag with black mini dots and Ace Progrès orange bag, both available at The Travel Club; Sanuk siesta red slippers, available at Rustan's Makati and Kickers

Flashpacker
Columbia Sportswear Co. men's long-sleeve golden glow stretch crew shirt and pants; La Fuma orange chair; The North Face adrenaline shades and blue knapsack; Tsubo gray shoes, available at Rustan's Makati and Kickers



White delight
On Sara: white long sleeves with leather trim, printed blue cotton shorts, white patent Gommini flats, all by Tod's
On Nikki: white long sleeved dress with leather trim, cream suede ballerina Dee with black patent toe, all by Tod's



Patales please
On Sara: patchwork calf leather sleeveless dress, cream Sophie suede platform sandals, brandy-colored Peggy bag in vintage calf leather with gold ring design, all by Tod's
On Nikki: off-white calf leather zip-up jacket, patchwork leather skirt, ballerina Dee flats, porcelain Boomerang bag in calf, all by Tod's

classic with a twist

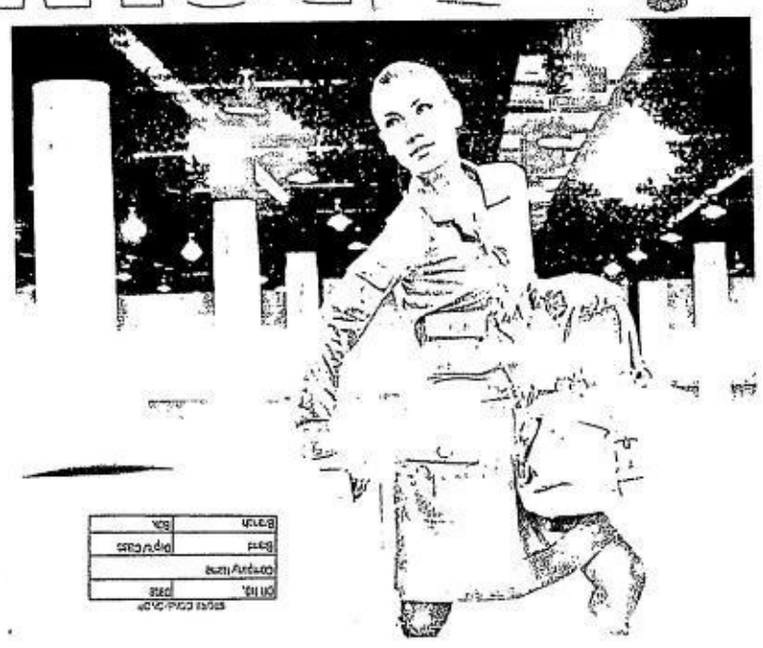
Loafing around
Cream cashmere polo shirt, printed blue cotton pants, white patent Gommini flats, Beach waisted belt in calf leather, all by Tod's

DESPITE THE BLAZING HEAT, LOOK and feel cool this summer with the new and sophisticated Spring-Summer 2007 Collection from Tod's. Indulge in gorgeous shoes, bags and accessories made from luxurious natural leathers, in assorted dazzling, sun-kissed colors.

The new collection gives a modern twist to Tod's classics, by adding interesting embellishment to already chic, contemporary design. Pieces are sculptured into detailed shapes and sizes, offering the wearer something both sturdy yet delicate.

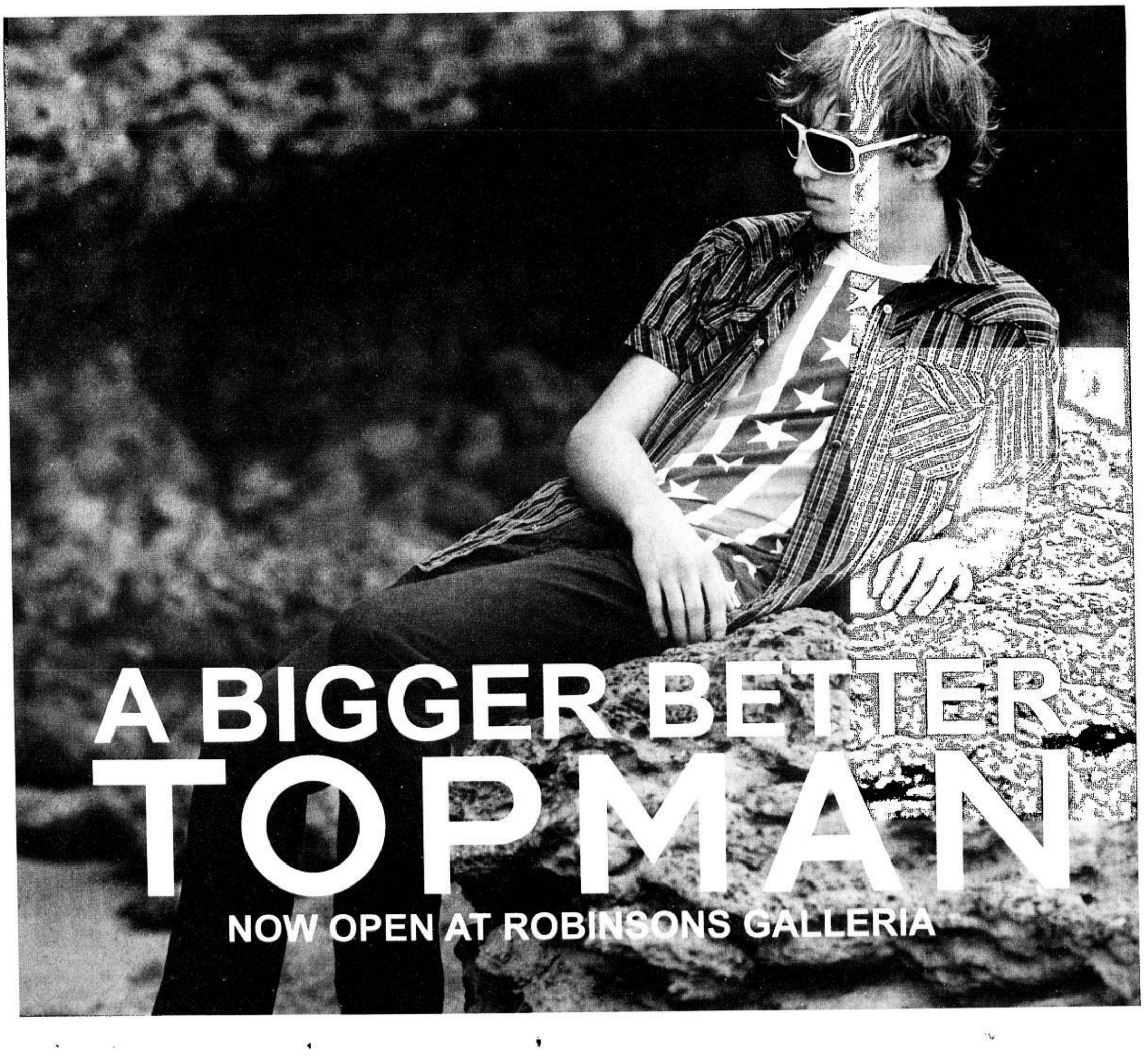
The influence of the sun, the sea and fresh air is evident in this collection's elements of design, color, and weightlessness of material. Enjoy the best that summer has to offer as interpreted by Tod's.

The Spring-Summer 2007 Women's Collection of Shoes and Accessories are available at the Tod's boutique in Greenbelt 4. Tod's is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists Inc. and is available at Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati.

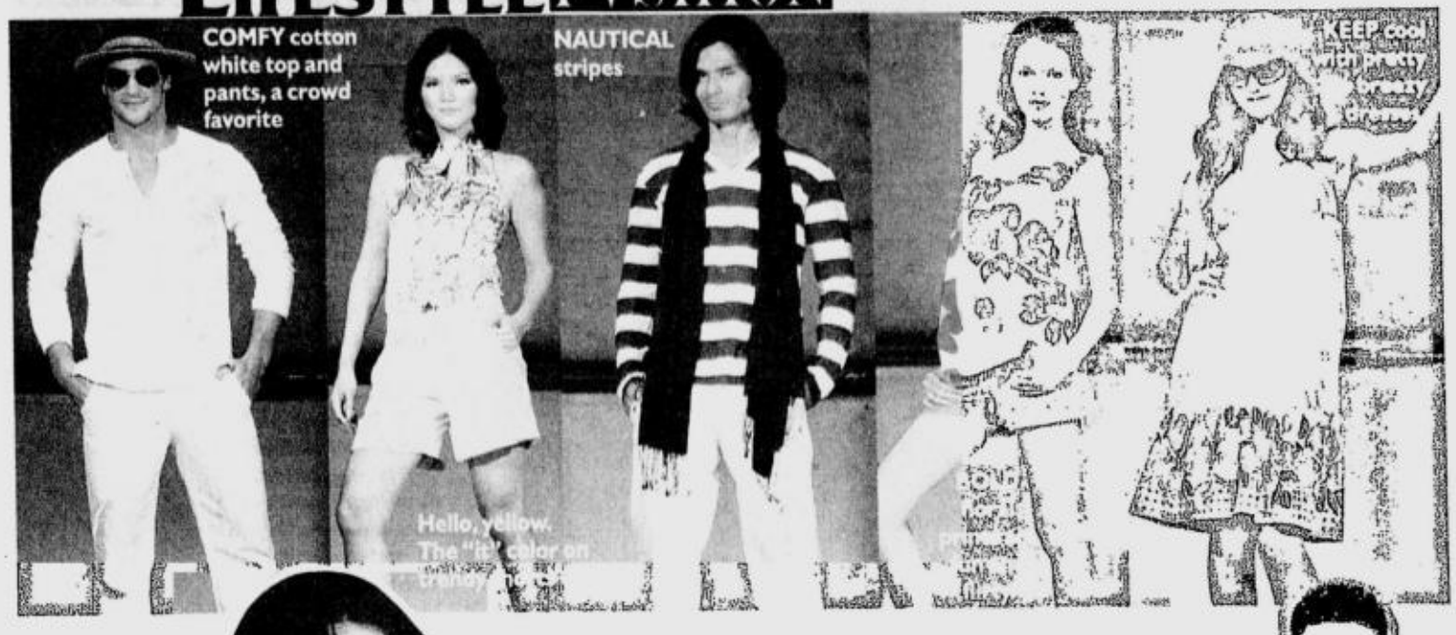


SHOT ON LOCATION AT THE TRADE HALL OF MARKET! MARKET!
ALL CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES BY TOD'S, AVAILABLE IN GREENBELT 4

Orange long sleeved dress, light green Carey calf leather bag, both by Tod's



KIDDIE fashionistas strut their stuff.



- Don't forget underpants are supposed to be worn under the pants.
- Don't forget to tuck your polo shirt in.
- Don't forget there's no such thing as *tucked out*.
- Don't forget skinny jeans don't make you skinny.
- Don't forget sandals with stockings work only if you're from a department store.
- Don't forget brushing alone is not enough.

hot hues

GENERATION iPod look, which can be worn in style from school straight to the barkada hangout

Text by Jessica Hermosa and Andrea Toledo
Contributors
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

TEMPERATURES SOARED during the Zara Spring-Summer 2007 fashion show held recently at the Rockwell Tent. High hems and bright colors ruled the runway in functional styles that were ready to battle the heat, but were still jet-setter worthy.

Golden men in light summer pieces, women sporting fun yet sultry designs, and kids in mini-fashionista get-ups strutted on the runway and showed the audience how to wear the curious contrasting fashions for Spring-Summer 2007.

Drawing from retro fashions of the '70s and '80s, Zara's silhouettes for women were refreshingly youthful. Shapes were voluminous with structured accents around the shoulders and waistlines. No-fuss cuts came in the season's statement colors of lemon yellow, salmon and teal.

The summer must-have, the mini-dress, came with modest necklines and billowy bottoms that stopped short above the knee. Tropical fabric prints, floral embellishments and punchy citrus colors made the classic mini-dress extra cool for the season. Chunky wedges—in white or nude—gave the mini a sophisticated look while navy sneakers and an over-sized bag turned it casual.

Shorts, the obvious summer choice, were mostly tight and thigh-high in khaki, white, orange, and yellow. In keeping with the trendy silhouette, they were paired with long flouncy blouses embellished with frills and pleats.

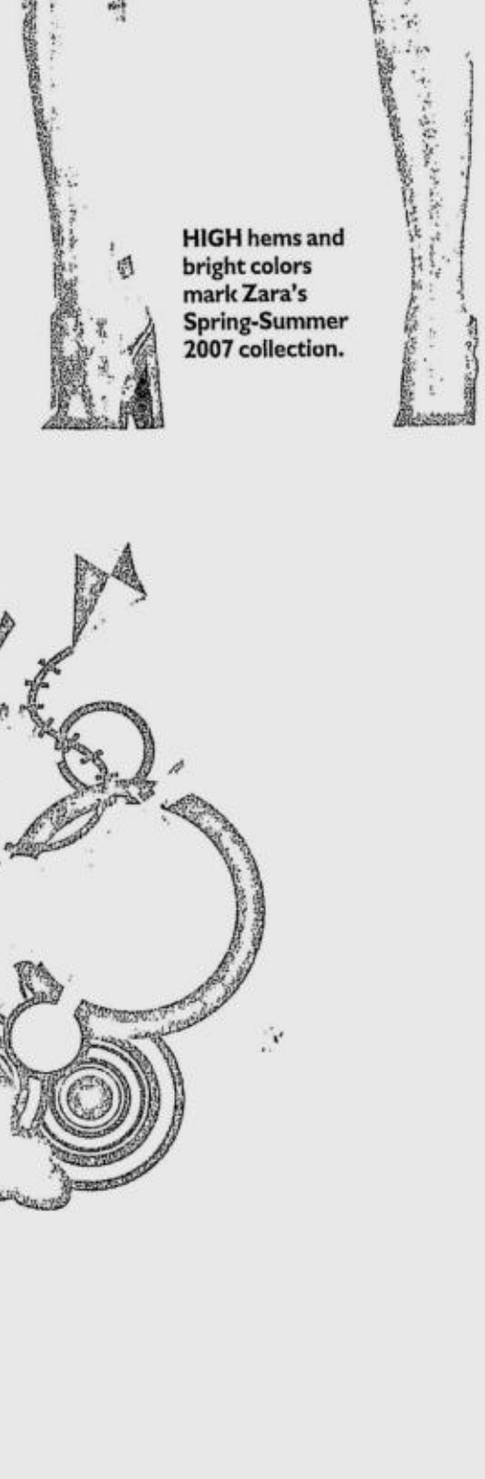
Khaki office wear also raged on the Zara runway, in light fabrics such as flax linen and woven cotton. Neutral jackets and pants were spruced up with unexpected red and yellow undershirts.

Wearable elegance with a touch of childish whimsy could very well be the catchphrase for Zara's women's collection, as sporty styles were contrasted with elegant structured pieces in vibrant hues.

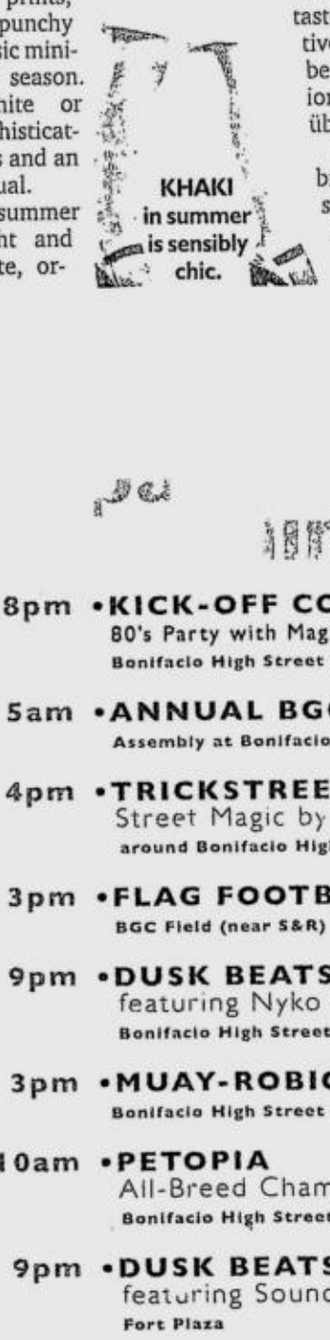
The Zara Spring-Summer 2007 Collection for men, on the other hand, was simply "fabulous," according to Filipino model Wilma Doesnt, one of the fashionistas present at the event.

Zara offered edgy designs perfect for men who wanted to exude a fine taste for fashion while living an active lifestyle. The collection will be a sure hit among today's fashion-conscious metrosexuals and übersexuals.

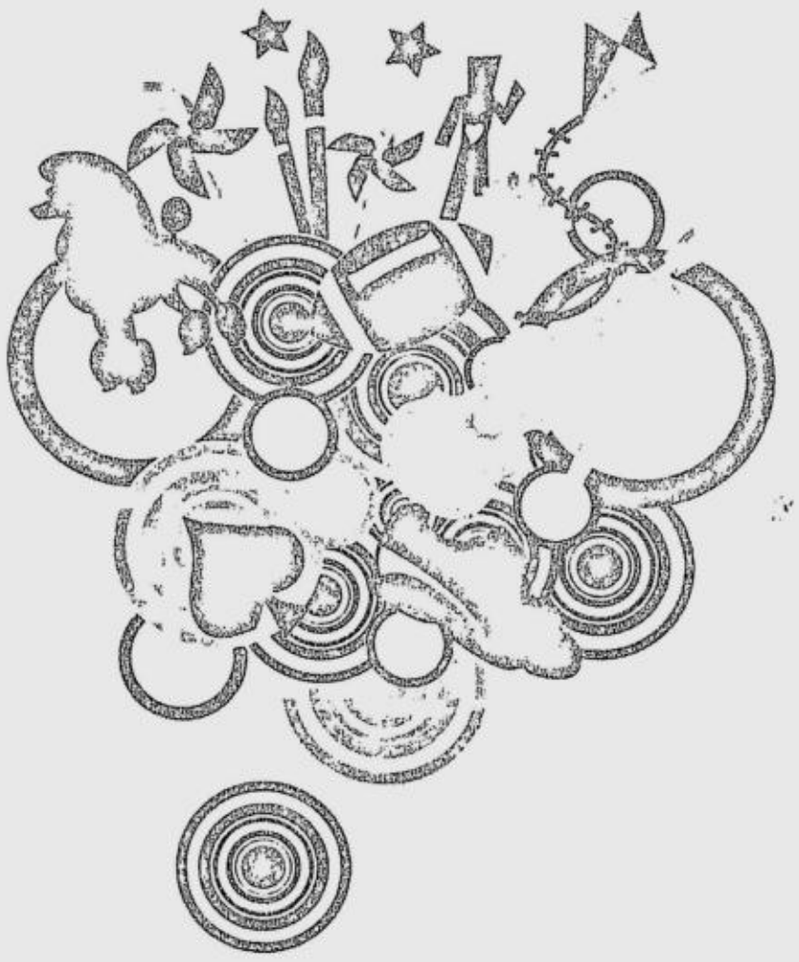
Zara, like a few other high-end brands, may not have as large a selection for men as for women, but its styles definitely have a classic feel to them.



HIGH hems and bright colors mark Zara's Spring-Summer 2007 collection.



KHAKI in summer is sensibly chic.



Apr 28 8pm •KICK-OFF CONCERT
80's Party with Magic 89.9
Bonifacio High Street (near Crocs)

Apr 29 5am •ANNUAL BGC FUN RUN
Assembly at Bonifacio High Street (near Starbucks)

4pm •TRICKSTREET
Street Magic by Conrad Alampay
around Bonifacio High Street

May 5 3pm •FLAG FOOTBALL
BGC Field (near S&R)

9pm •DUSK BEATS
featuring Nyko Maca
Bonifacio High Street (near Krispy Kreme)

May 6 3pm •MUAY-ROBICS
Bonifacio High Street (near Starbucks)

May 12 10am •PETOPIA
All-Breed Championship Dog Show
Bonifacio High Street (near Krispy Kreme)

9pm •DUSK BEATS
featuring Sound
Fort Plaza

May 13 3pm •FLYING COLORS
Kite Flying Festival
BGC Field (near S&R)

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LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

Filipino designer makes news again in US

Natori marks 30th year by elevating sleepwear to high fashion

NATORI in summer's "it" color—white—during the Lakandula Awards in Malacañang

IF THERE'S A FILIPINO FASHION designer abroad whom United States media diligently cover, it's **Josie Natori.** Just early this week, she was on the headlines of Women's Wear Daily (WWD) in two stories: the launch of her luxury sleepwear and her acceptance of the Ellis Island Award in New York.

Natori, who celebrates her 30th year in fashion this year, digs in in what WWD heralds as a "new niche in the lingerie industry": luxury sleepwear and glamorous at-home-wear. (A sub-category in clothes is born every minute. Time was, clothes were only either for day or night, and pajamas were pajamas, period.)

The luxe collection consists of sleepwear that's too glamorous and beautiful to wear just for sleeping. "I started thinking of the things I would wear while entertaining in Paris; things to show off in," Natori told WWD how she conceptualized the line.

The line represents Natori's design heritage of 30 years—prints, colors, accents, craftsmanship. It consists of pants (silk, of course), tops, kimonos and so-in-demand slip gowns, and caftans. Its Fall fabrics are silk and cashmere and for Spring, linens and silks. It has handcrafted embroideries, appliqués, beading, quilting and custom-made lace from Italy.

"This collection is not about hanging around the house watching television," Natori told WWD. "You can wear it at home while giving a party or wear a glorious-looking kimono out to a party."

Anybody who wears a Natori knows that what she has on is too beautiful just to keep hidden in the bedroom. At one afternoon party, I saw a matron in Natori printed pajamas, accessorized with pearls.

One night in a hotel in Beijing, I had already slipped into bed in Natori cream-and-black pajamas when the phone rang; it was a frantic **Maurice Arcache** (why wasn't I surprised?) asking me to rush down to the lobby for some life-and-death errand. And I did rush downstairs, in those Natori pajamas, with a red pashmina thrown around my shoulders. Seeing me, Maurice thought I was ready to step out again. From then on I knew I could get away with those silk pajamas in a hotel lobby.

That's how rich the Natori print heritage is, and how Natori has elevated innerwear and sleepwear to dressy, even luxurious fashion. Imagine tapping this print archive of 30 years for a celebratory line of sleepwear.

Emotional

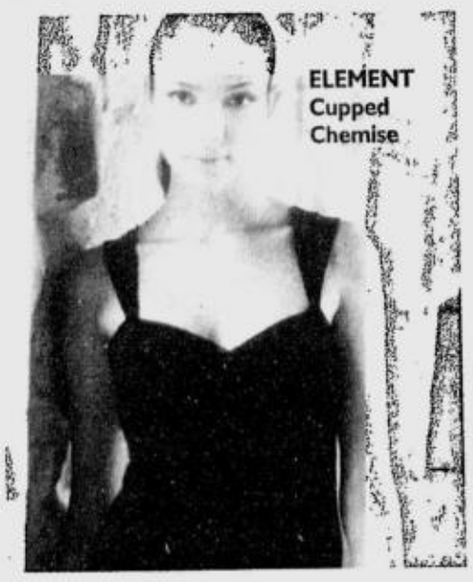
It was an emotional Natori who received the Ellis Island Family Heritage Award on April 17. The Awards are annually presented by the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation.

"They had this picture of me and a timeline of my life. My mother flew over from the Philippines, and I was crying. It was so beautiful and touching," she told WWD.

It's been 30 years since Natori, an invest-

FILIPINO/ D3

NATORI Viola Camisole



ELEMENT Cupped Chemise

Shakey's

Dine'n Drive

Raffle Promo

1st Prize
The all-new
2007 Honda CRV

2nd Prize
2 Hong Kong trip packages
for 5 (4 days, 3 nights)

3rd Prize
10 Acer Laptops

4th Prize
10 Nokia N70s
(Music Edition)

5th Prize
10 30G Apple iPods

6th Prize
10 Sony DSC-S650
Cybershot Cameras

Consolation Prize
100 Shakey's Gift Certificates
worth P1000 each

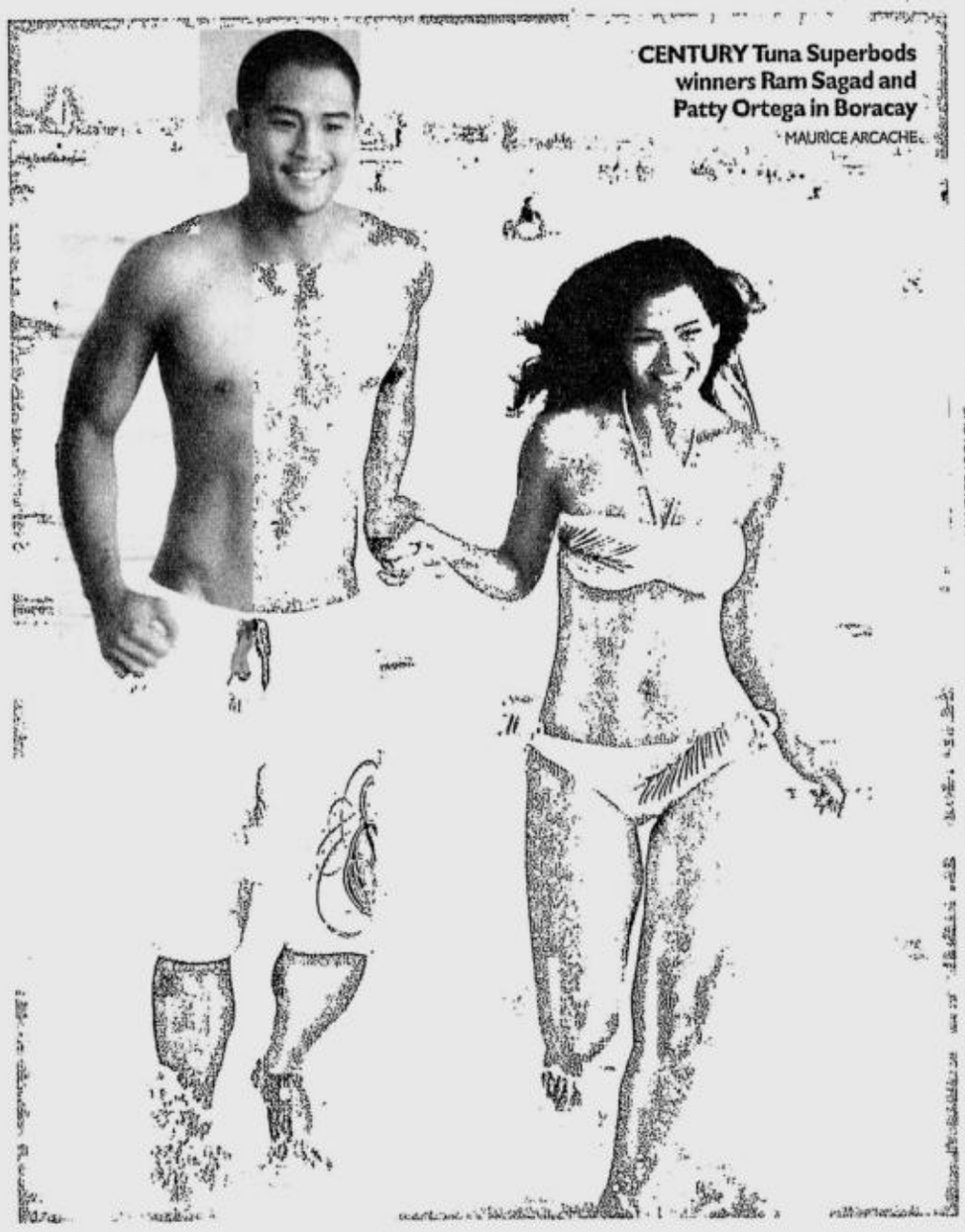
Every Php 500
purchase with
a whole pizza order
gives you a chance
to win
the all-new 2007
Honda CRV!

Promo period
is from May 1 to July 31, 2007
Draw date is on August 5, 2007.
Deadline for the submission of entries
is July 31, 2007

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1718,
Series of 2007

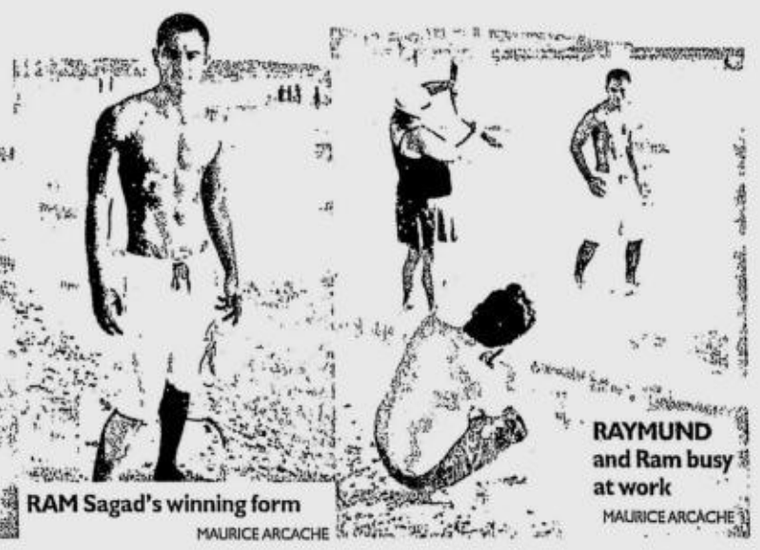
See posters and flyers for details

It's gotta be
Shakey's



CENTURY Tuna Superbods winners Ram Sagad and Patty Ortega in Boracay
MAURICE ARCACHE

ORTEGA posing for Raymund Isaac during the shoot for Century Tuna's new ad campaign
MAURICE ARCACHE



RAM Sagad's winning form
MAURICE ARCACHE

RAYMUND and Ram busy at work
MAURICE ARCACHE

HANDSOME hunks Marc Nelson, Brad Turvey and Rovilson Fernandez

HSBC'S Maurice Yap, cousin of Tim Yap (right), Cebuana Tina Lim, Jane Ong and Anne Marie Manubag

MARIO Dumaual and Margaret Wilson

CENTURY Tuna marketing manager Ayet Evangelista with the winners

Tuna Superbods 200 APRIL 28

ELAINE Yap and DJ spinner Karl Ty

So hot yet so heavenly

IT WAS A HOT, HOT SUMMER WITH cool parties heating up Boracay, *palanggas*, as popular Century Tuna held its Superbods Beachfest 2007.

The fantastic two-day Century Tuna Sunset Party was hosted by beautiful VJ and TV host **Iya Villania** and cyber-smart actor-model **Derek Ramsay**, no less.

Top personalities, media people and Superbods finalists, in their white beach garb, arrived in Bora after a 35-minute ride on SeAir, the official airline of Century Tuna Superbods 2007.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

Once I had settled in my hotel room at the Pearl of the Pacific, natch, *moi* rushed over for the chill-out gig in Club Paraw, where we sampled the zesty delight of Century Tuna's new yummy variant, which has, take note, 50 percent less fat and less salt, with a zesty hot and spicy flavor.

The next day, Century Tuna gave us beach bums a blast with free massage, hair braiding and henna tattoos in Pier One, while aspiring models had the last chance to join the hottest image-model search in the wild-card go-see.

In the afternoon, guests turned up the heat as they competed in the celebrity beach games such as extreme relay game and fishing challenge, among others, *palanggas*.

In the evening, *palanggas*, it was time for the most awaited event on the island. Twenty-two super healthy-looking semifinalists from Manille were joined by the eight wild-card contestants from the go-see held earlier in the afternoon, and they battled it all out for a chance to become Century Tuna's next male and female healthy image models.

The contest was looking for models who have "not only gorgeous bodies and passion for healthy lifestyle but also great confidence and motivation to succeed in whatever he or she pursues in life," according to organizers.

Brilliant **Marielle Santos** of Cinderella cut short her vacation with her *famille* in the US just to be with her fiancé, Century Tuna's brilliant, young and hardworking **Leo Po**. She watched the grand finalists on stage as they wore all-white Twinkle Ferraren Swimsuits and board shorts, by Resort Shop, all available at Cinderella, natch!

The contestants were later trimmed down to 12 finalists, who each faced a challenging Q&A portion with the judges: supermodel **Rissa Samson**; in-demand top fashion photographer **Raymund Isaac**; brilliant fashion director **Robby Carmona**; adorable Mega Publishing Group president and CEO **Sari Yap**; corporate imaging specialist **Jojie Dingcong**; PDI's social columnist **Maurice Arcache** (as in *moi*); PC&V Communications vice president **Ariel Comia**, and Century Tuna's superb marketing manager **Ayet Evangelista**.

STEPHEN Ku, Cinderella's Marielle Santos and Elaine Yap

SEAIR'S Patrick Tan, Century Tuna's Leo Po and Robert Dean Barbers of the Philippine Tourism Authority

PAOLO Trillo and ABS-CBN Publishing's Ernie Lopez

DANI Aligoa, Dingcong, Elena Carrasco and Gorka Otxoa

One dusky contestant who cried while explaining how she wanted to get into modeling but couldn't seem to make it because of her dark skin had the audience applauding for her, and made a golden-hearted **Robby Carmona** promise her over the mic that he was getting her as a model, which made her cry more out of happiness, *palanggas*.

Finally, it was time to announce this year's Century Tuna Superbods winners. And the lucky two were boyish and good-looking **Ram Sagad** and smart and eye-catching **Patty Ortega**. They each won an exclusive one-year modeling contract with Century Tuna worth P500,000.

The first runners-up were **Mica Tuaño** and **JC Tiuseco**. Second runners-up were **Dorothy Aragye** and **Ralph Kiefer**.

Winning the People's Choice Awards were **Alizon Andres** and **Jamie Diago**, who got the most number of votes from texters. They went home with P50,000 each.

After the contest, it was time to party, and party we did (especially the ones who didn't win) to the hot music dished out by DJ **Karl Ty** of Superfly.

Having a great time were **Robert Dean Barbers**, general manager of the Philippine Tourism Authority; health buff **Patrick Tan**, vice president of SeAir; **Socky Pitargue** of PC&V Communications, Century Tuna's advertising agency; **Camille Prats** and gorgeous **Phoemela Baranda**, and last year's Superbods winners **Jon Mullaly** and **Michelle Padua**.

The invitees were treated to fab raffle prizes such as Sony PSP, Apple iPod Video, Canon Digital IXUS 850 IS, and Nokia N70 mobile phones.

At 4 p.m. the following day, the Superbods 2007 winners started their first shot for Century Tuna's print ad campaign, right on the beach.

The pictorial was shot by no less than mega fashion lensman Raymund Isaac and directed by PC&V Communications' Ariel Comia and **Bambi Reyes**.

I was there, too, taking shots of them. Raymund and I made them go through several shots that would be used for an ad campaign in June and July.

On this page are the scoop photos *moi* took while the photo shoot went on till sunset, *palanggas*.

In between takes, *moi* asked the 23-year-old Patty, who hails from Sta. Mesa, Manille, what her plans were. "After my commitment with Century Tuna, and besides modeling, I also want to have a stable career in the future," she said. "Of course, I aspire to be trim and healthy until I reach my golden years."

CENTURY Tuna's Donna Morales with Thea Tan, Evangelista, Gigi Angkaw and Heart Alarcon

JUDGES Jojie Dingcong, Ariel Comia of PC&V Communications, Evangelista and Robby Carmona

GLOBE Asiatique's Divine Lee and Charmaine Palermo

JUDGES Rissa Samson, Raymund Isaac, Sari Yap and Maurice Arcache (as in, *moi*)

MODEL Brent Javier

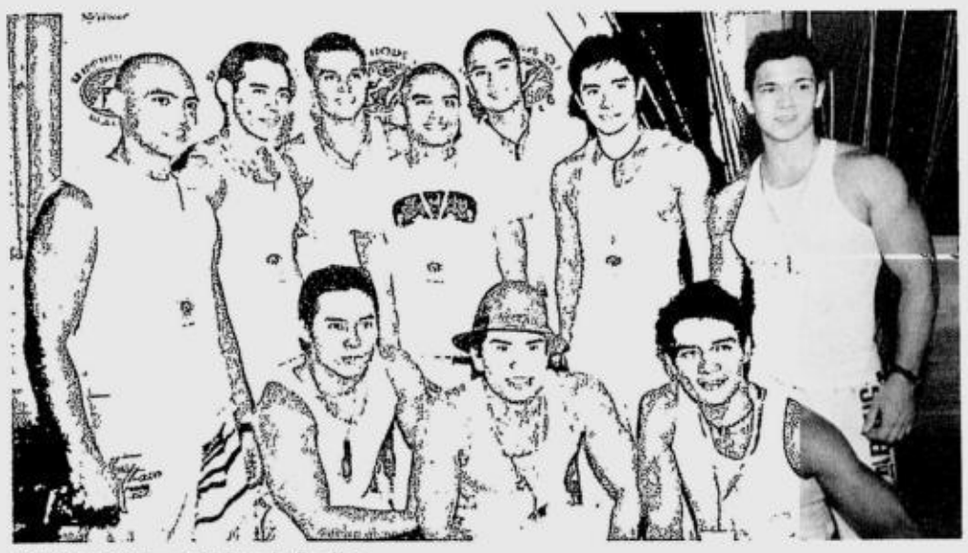
TV'S gorgeous Phoemela Baranda

I also asked Ram his plans. "Opportunities knock but once in our lives and I don't want any regrets that I wasn't able to try," said the 21-year-old hunk from Manille who plays basketball for San Sebastian College. Seeing how tired he was, *moi* asked him a final question, "Which is more tiring, doing photo work or basketball? With his boyish smile, he answered, "Photo shoots."

With the winners' undeniable X factor and their intelligence, we definitely see them hitting it big as the new faces of Century Tuna. Their future in the modeling industry looks bright, dahlings.

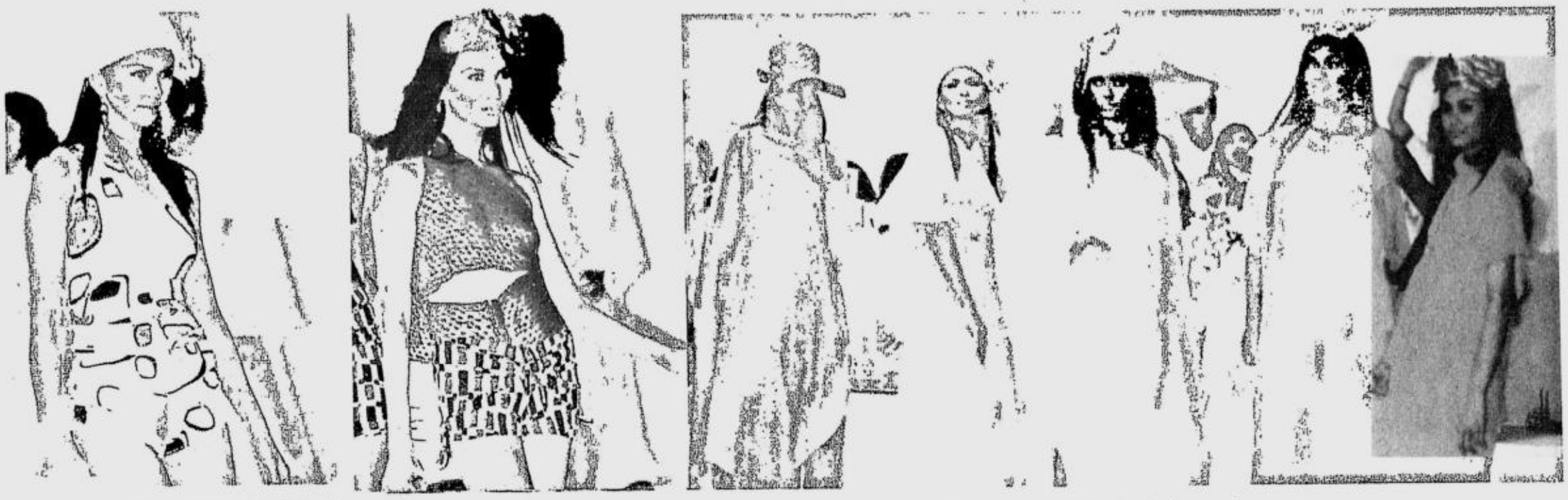
Century Tuna Superbods Beachfest 2007 truly gave us new faces and bodies to watch out for. It also gave us one of the grandest Boracay beach parties this summer, thanks to the help and professionalism of PR high priest, **Edd Fuentes** of Fuentes Publicity Network Inc.

Hey, *palanggas, moi* never knew it could be sooo hot in heaven.



CENTURY Tuna 2007 male finalists

CENTURY Tuna 2007 female finalists



MODELS Joy Caralde and Ria Bolivar; Baddeo's '70s-inspired caftans and peasants

Loose change

FASHION designer Eddie Baddeo showcased his latest collection at the recent Philippine launch of Absolut Apeach, the newest variant of international liquor brand Absolut Vodka.

Inspired by the iconic fashion of the '70s, Baddeo created caftan and peasant dresses in printed chiffon in the colors of the sunset—peach and yellow. Underneath the dresses were tankini shorts and tops in geometric, abstract and Pucci lycra prints.

Filipino designer makes news

From page D1

ment banker and the first female vice-president in investment banking at Merrill Lynch, ventured into designing and selling hand-embroidered blouses from the Philippines—in New York. Since her first account which was Bloomingdale's, she's turned Natori into a world fashion brand.

Last month Natori was presented the Lakandula Award at Malacañang by **President Macapagal-Arroyo**. That, too, landed on WWD. (Who says only **Imelda Marcos** makes it to WWD?)

Irene's dinner

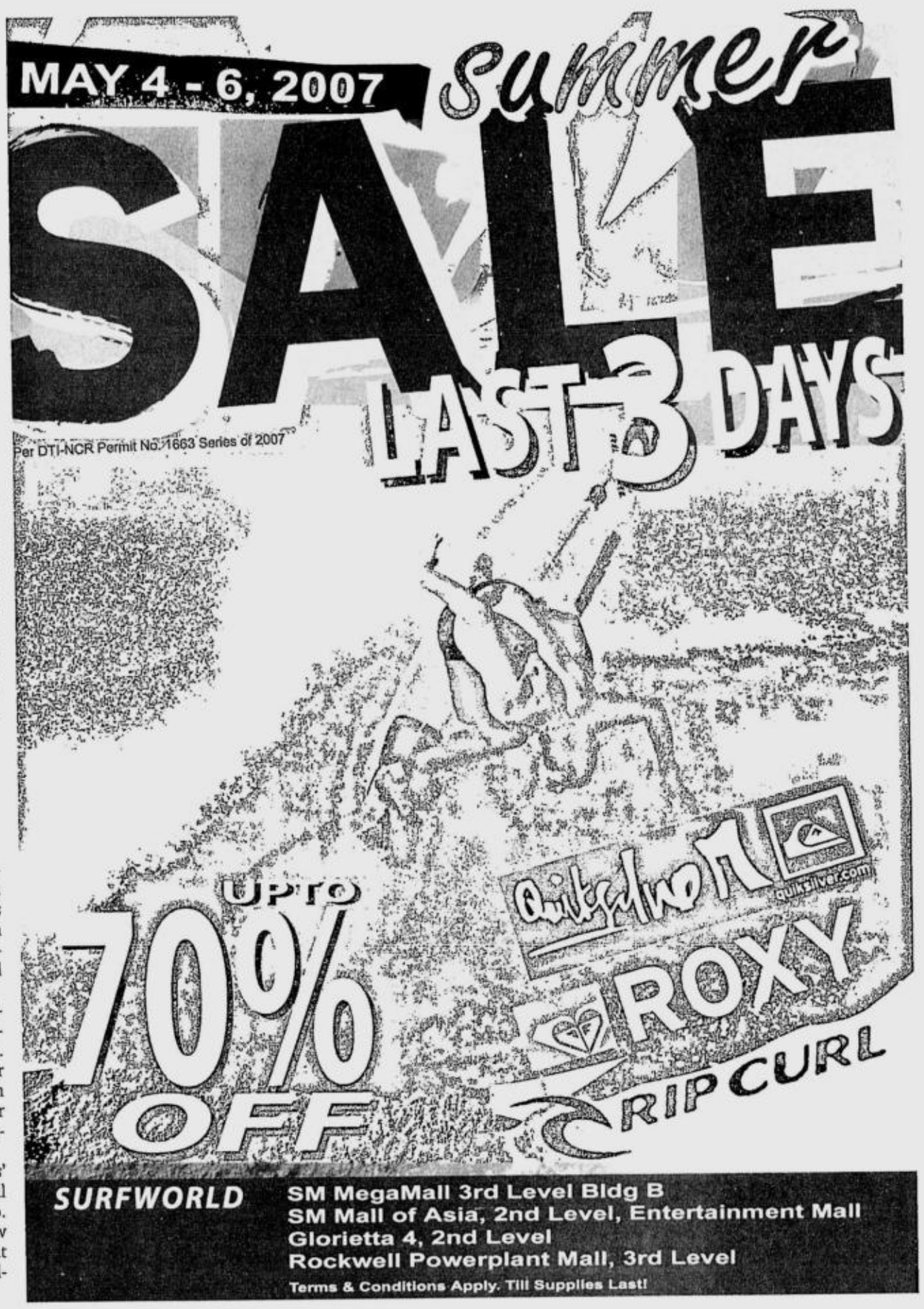
One evening recently, **Irene Marcos Araneta** welcomed a handful of guests to her McKinley residence for a dinner she hosted for the Ateneo Art Gallery staff.

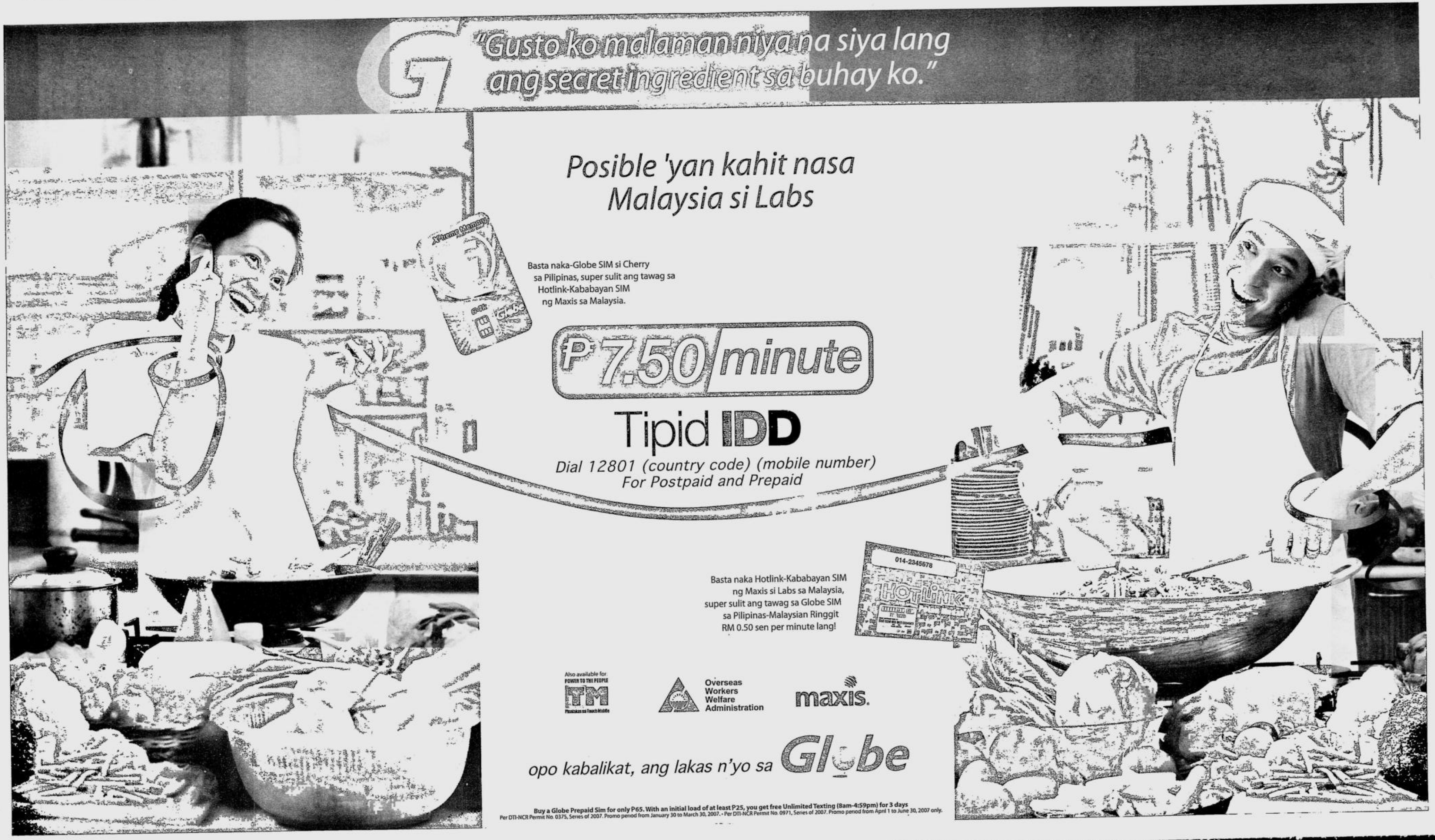
The dinner was for gallery managing director **Richie Lerma** to introduce to society Ateneo's head curator, **Yael Buencamino**. Yael is the daughter of **Greggy's** sister **Elvira**.

Among the guests were Lopez Museum director **Cedie Lopez Vargas** (whose son is a good friend of Irene's son); Ayala Museum's new director **Petty Benitez-Johannot** (whom we knew as one of the country's top ramp models before she left for studies abroad); and Metro Society editor **Raul Manzano**.

Jullie Yap Daza is reprinting her book "Etiquette for Mistresses," due to big demand, according to her publisher, Anvil Publishing. With daughter **Penny**, who's back here after her husband, **Mike Tuviera**, finished a film course in Los Angeles, Jullie updated her book with a portion on texting. (Text messaging is a romance trap.)

We asked Jullie over dinner at **Ricky Reyes'** house if today's emboldened mistresses still follow some etiquette. Jullie said they do. Why do we get the impression that it's now the wives who toe the etiquette line? For that matter, why not a book on "Etiquette for Filipino Husbands"?




"Gusto ko malaman niya na siya lang ang secret ingredient sa buhay ko."
Posible 'yan kahit nasa Malaysia si Labs
Basta naka-Globe SIM si Cherry sa Pilipinas, super sulit ang tawag sa Hotlink-Kababayan SIM ng Maxis sa Malaysia.
₱7.50 minute
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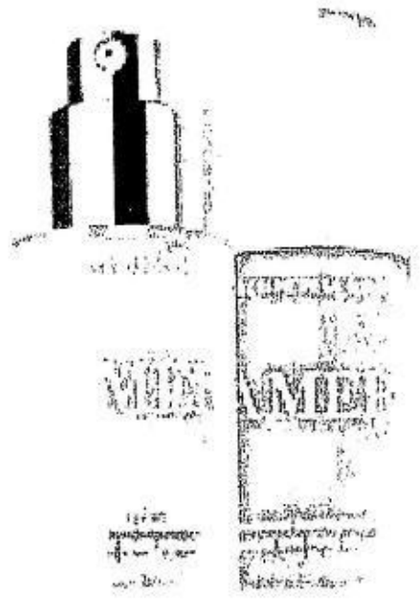
Take cover and recover

MOST OF MY sun-worshipping friends come home from the beach and complain to me about the leathery and blotchy state of their skin, then ask me what they can do about it.

They know how fanatical I am about these things so they stress they are only willing to work on their face area.

My compromise is to insist they include the neck because there is no use having a pretty face but also having an old, crepe-y neck!

Kinny Salas



LA MER Treatment Fluid Foundation SPF 15

Foundation

The perfect formula will cover imperfections and will bring your skin as close to flawless as possible. Get one with a treatment incorporated so you are not just hiding the problem but reversing it at the same time. Limited to face area.

1. Crème de La Mer Treatment Créme Foundation SPF 15 (P5,500) or Fluid SPF 15 (P4,875). Those who are believers in La Mer Cream would be pleased to know that the active ingredients such as the blue algae among other marine components are incorporated in the foundation.

Crème is perfect for normal to dry skin types while Fluid is for oily skin or a combination of other skin types. There are six seamless skin shades to choose from—from pink to yellow tones. It is expensive but this will be your moisturizer, sunblock and foundation with medium coverage in one.

2. Lancôme UV Expert DNA Shield SPF 50+ makeup base (P2,495). This is a tinted moisturizer that gives sheer coverage, a glow and moist look to dried-out, dull and sun-abused skin. It blurs out minimal skin imperfections, protects against the sun and pollution, and brightens skintone through its active ingredients of brown seaweed and white willow extract. Yellow tones and dullness are actually corrected over time.

White friends

Brightening/whitening skincare products are your friends.

Once again, I cannot stress it often enough, products labeled whitening will not make you Michael Jackson-white! They will just bring you back to your original lightest baby skin color as their main target is to clean up skin damage so your skin will be even-colored all over.

Stop telling me you are proud to be *morena* and don't want to be Caucasian white because unless you originally were, it really isn't going to happen. You need serious bleaching and skin peeling for that.

LANCÔME Blanc Expert Neurowhite X3

LA MER foundation brush for even seamless coverage

LA MER Treatment Crème Foundation SPF 15

Products labeled whitening do not peel your skin; they will only make your skin even, so it's best to use them day and night for good results.

You should apply the whitening products on your neck as well because dark discoloration on the neck will be very noticeable as the neck is close to the face.

Lancôme Neurowhite essence (P5,495), Clinique Dermawhite, Shu Uemura White Recovery EX and Godiva Licorice work for either oily or dry skin. But one has to use the toner proper to one's skin type. Recommended range for oily skin: Fasio Extra White and Awake Exbright. For dry skin: Sekki Sei and Estée Lauder Cyberwhite.

One new product I recently tested for a full three weeks did not use whitening or brightening in its claims; but the result showed a lightening of the skin on the face due to the fading of minor dark spots from the sun and old pimple marks. It is called Nu Skin 180°.

Each step of the treatment has a dual or potent purpose. The face wash contains 10-percent active vitamin C to target age spots and discoloration.

The Skin Mist contains peptides from rice proteins known for firming the skin, reversing wrinkles and preventing new ones from forming.

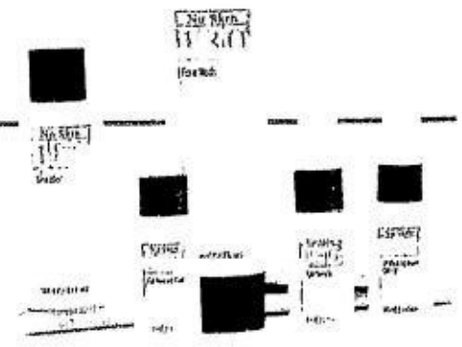
The Cell Renewal Fluid allows the exfoliation of even the most sensitive of skin because it uses Polyhydroxy acid instead of AHA or BHA. So dry, damaged dead skin is removed to allow new skin to emerge.

The UV Block Hydrator SPF 18 for Day and Night Complex promotes DNA repair and strengthens skin.

The catch: Nu Skin 180° costs P18,000 a set.

Acne, hyperpigmentation, huge gaping pores? Mostly it is men or athletes who come to me with this problem as they don't use SPF, are very acne-prone, and have zero to basic (soap and water) skincare regimen. Others just have a tough battle with hormones.

LANCÔME UV Expert DNA Shield



NU SKIN 180° line

Clarifying program

Check with your dermatologist and inquire about the Obagi Nu-Derm or Glytone clarifying program. This is akin to starting out with a clean slate. It will dry up the acne, peel off the uneven and rough upper layer to level skin off, and refine pores' appearance.

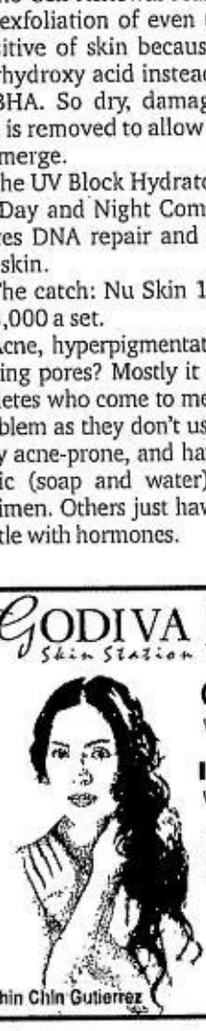
There will be redness, soreness and peeling but the results in 90 days will be worthwhile.

The catch: Once you start using this, though, you cannot leave the house without at least SPF 45. Even indoors, I would use SPF 30 and sleep with an SPF 15 moisturizer up to three months after the end of my Obagi program.

The treatment gave me the skin of an 11-year-old as told by a skin test so I cannot complain.

Expensive huh? Isn't it cheaper to just skip some beach trips or apply SPF 50 or up when you are there? Prevention is cheaper than the cure.

GODIVA Skin Station *Pamper your skin... for less*



Chin Chin Gutierrez

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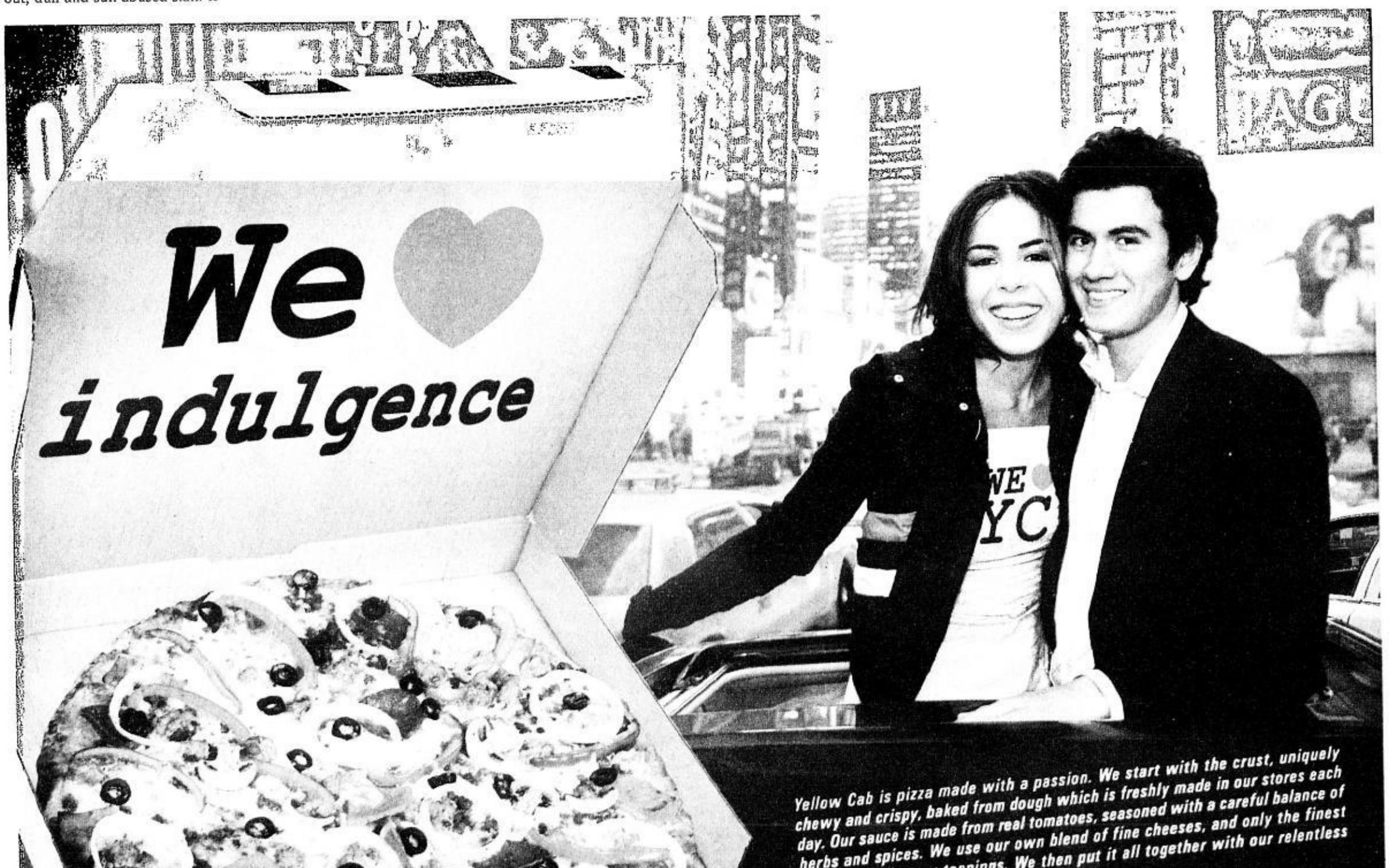


My best beauty bet

Olay Total Effects has made a believer out of this recovering beauty-product junkie

By Irene C. Perez

FOR SOMEONE with skin issues since puberty and who had her first derma appointment in fourth grade, I was definitely up for the Olay Total Effects challenge.

I've always had problem skin. I started having breakouts even before I had my period. And oh, the zits didn't just cover my face; they spread like an epidemic all over my neck, back, chest, shoulders, even my upper arms! I was a zit factory. Chances are, if you had seen an overweight girl with long, thick unruly hair, and pimply face half-covered with heavy plastic eyeglasses in the '90s, it was me.

While every other 10-year-old was busy discovering boys, I was busy wondering why other girls (even guys!) didn't have a lonely pimple, why their faces were as supple as a baby's and mine was on an oil-spill 24/7.

My "condition" alarmed my mother, and, like any other loving one, she got worried about my fluctuating self-esteem. Thus the clinic-hopping in search of the best dermatologist who would be my "saviour."

Hefty fees

A dermatologist visit in the '90s meant a lot of pricking, a cocktail of "house medicines" they formulated themselves, and hefty doctors' fees.

Clinic No. 1 was a skin center hell with white walls. The doctor (I'm not even sure now if she was a real doctor) asked me to lie down, put some gooey cream on my face, and prick, prick, prick she did. The experience literally left me scarred for life, because while she assured me that my pores would close up "soon"—thanks to my young skin—the pockmarks have stayed proudly open.

And so my mother shoved me to Clinic No. 2 where I encountered another pricking-happy doctor except, at 11, I was already used to painful and abrasive procedures. One thing I noticed, though: she gave me the same products she'd prescribe to patients 20 years older than I was! One was a calamine lotion that closely resembled Caladryl, which I had to apply on all affected areas daily (just imagine the pink stains on my clothes and sheets).

Beauty junkie

What came next was a haze of doctors, oral medications, astringents, clarifying lotions and pimple treatments which were increased in dosage each month because my skin just wouldn't cooperate.

THE BEAUTY multi-tasker that even men use.

THE AUTHOR JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

I knew what SPF, AHA and BHA stood for even before I knew $e=mc^2$. I knew what hypo-allergenic and non-comedogenic meant before I could manually extract square roots. I knew what glycolic and salicylic acid did before I had a chemistry class. And by sixth grade, I was using heavy products meant for women in their 30s, and this alarmed me: What the hell would I be using when I reached 30?

As my mother said: "It wasn't just about vanity, it's more about hygiene. We are talking about self-worth here!"

Skin rehab

With, ahem, age, the zits stopped—as if someone had turned the mass production of the damn thing off. One or two pops out every now and then and that was it. The pressing problem now are the scars the many treatments have left on my face. I was on skin rehab.

And then came Olay Total Effects.

The product vows to fight the seven signs of skin aging which are fine lines and wrinkles; rough skin texture; uneven skintone; dullness of skin surface; visible pores; blotches and age spots; and dryness. I happen to have all those, thanks to being a former anti-breakout advocate.

Some may say an anti-aging regimen is too early for someone in her 20s, but I was probably on tretinoin earlier than your *lola*. So I had my first Olay Beauty Imaging System (BIS) scan a month ago to test my skin, and there it was: dull, discolored, rough, with age spots and giant pores.

I replaced my old moisturizer with Olay Total Effects and used it daily for 30 days as a sunblock since it has UV protection.

Launched early last year with Miriam Quiambao as its brand ambassador, Olay lists Vitaniacin as its key ingredient, which is a combo of Niacinamide (vitamin B3), Panthenol (vitamin B5) and the skin salve vitamin E.

Multi-tasker

In the first two weeks, I noticed a change in my skin texture. The product didn't claim whitening, but my skin was brighter and clearer. The dark areas where the pimples had scarred were smoothened.

After two more weeks, there was a noticeable improvement in my pores, which now appeared smaller. I used it around my eye area, including the brow bone, and my dark undereye circles diminished. As a bonus, my stray eyebrows became finer.

My second BIS scan a month later revealed that my skin texture had improved by 70 percent; wrinkles, 100 percent; pores, 40 percent; and spots, 80 percent. I guess that should make a believer out of me who has tried one product too many.

I've long been looking for the perfect multi-tasker: a gentle moisturizer, brightener, mattifier with sun protection that could also serve as a makeup base. I've tried a number of over-the-counter products both local and foreign, from tinted ones to water-based to those with "pearls."

Most have left my skin greasy, some are just too expensive for their value, still others pretty much didn't do anything. Olay Total Effects is the best bet so far for this recovering beauty-product junkie.

The Olay Beauty Imaging System scan is available at the Olay counter in Watsons, SM Makati. Visit www.olay.com.ph.

E-mail the author at iperez@inquirer.com.ph

GOINGS ON

Cool, sophisticated brand endorser

FOLDED & HUNG'S SUMMER 2007 campaign presents young actress Maja Salvador as the brand's newest endorser. At 18, Salvador is proving to be a precocious talent. She won a Best Supporting Actress award for "Sukob" and a starring role in "Maalaala Mo Kaya" that gave her a Best Actress Nomination. She's a mainstay at ASAP, and was crowned the "Dance Princess of the Philippines." Her F&H campaign captures her youthful, cool yet sophisticated attitude, reflected in the collection's Mediterranean-inspired pieces reminiscent of summer sunsets.

FASHION EXHIBIT. Myth, set to open soon at Greenbelt 5, is a lifestyle boutique that's attracting great anticipation from fashion enthusiasts. A sneak peek into the store's offerings is on exhibit at the Greenbelt 3 lobby until May 6 featuring eight of the country's top designers and style experts.

SUMMER PROMO. Get a chance to win an overnight stay in Caylabne beach resort and a trip to Boracay with accommodations at Patio Pacific in Cinderella's Summer Getaway raffle.

WEDDING FAIR. Edsa Shangri-La Hotel and Wedding Essentials Magazine host the opening gala of the "I Do" wedding fair with a fashion show today at 6 p.m. in the Isla Ballroom. Featured designers are Ferdie Abuel, Jerome Ang, Joel Bautista, Susie Bonaobra, Kenneth Chua, Debbie Co, Carmen Lazaro, Brian Leyva, Michelle Lim, Choc & Yvette Religioso, Randall Solomon and Edwin Uy. On May 5, the wedding exhibit opens at 10 a.m. at the Isla Ballroom plus an exclusive selection from the country's finest jewelers at the Sulu function room. Also featured are wedding coordinator Rita Neri who will talk on wedding trends, wedding feng shui with Prof. Wedding Charlie Chao, FWDP wedding designers forum on how to choose the most flattering gown shape for your figure, Chinese wedding do's and don'ts by Peaches Go-Tiu, wine appreciation and wine tasting hosted by the Philippine Wine Merchant, the Chinese engagement ceremony and a groom's fashion show by Bergamo. Highlight of the fair is designer Frederick Peralta's "The Bride Empress Grand Bridal Fashion show." Admission is free. Call 6338888 ext. 9072/9074.

FLORAL DEMO. International floral designer Anson Low of Singapore will conduct a demonstration, "Floral Revolution," May 19-20, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Quezon City Sports Club, E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City. On the first day, Low will execute the latest designs and techniques in wedding floral arrangements. The second day will be devoted to futuristic flower arrangements plus the styles and techniques of constructions to enhance and make flower arrangements unique and stylish. Sponsors are Jasam Floral Sundries, Puentespina Orchids and Tropical Plants, and King Louis Flowers and Plants (tel. 8140847, 4152655, 6371140 and 9294114).

YOGA CLASSES. International Iyengar yoga instructor Cle Souren will conduct yoga seminars May 24-28 at the Manila Polo Club Fitness Center, 17 McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati. Call 8841219, 09177933796 or e-mail cris.mercado@johnclements.com.

IN KEEPING with the theme Traje Flora Filipino, 30 FDAP members and guests will create *ternos* with Philippine flowers for the *sagala*.

DOT spearheads grandest Flores de Mayo

THE ANNUAL FLORES DE MAYO JOINTLY organized by the Department of Tourism, the City of Manila and Unilever will be held May 6.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said the festival is part of the country's efforts to promote culture and the arts, highlighting the global competitiveness of Filipino fashion designs.

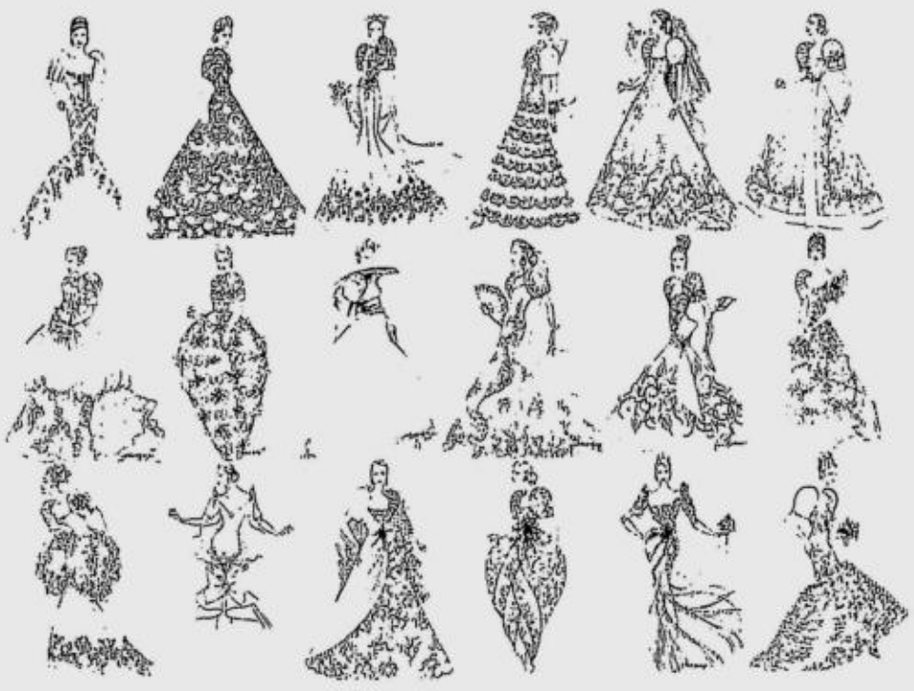
The organizing group is headed by Ben Farrales, founding chair of the Congregacion del Santissimo Nombre del Niño Jesus. He said the Congregacion would make sure that the liturgical significance of the festival honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved.

Theme this year is Traje Flora Filipino. More than 30 members and guests of the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines (FDAP) will create *ternos* with Philippine flowers.

Farrales said the highlight of the event is the competition among designers. Awards for outstanding creations are dubbed La Flor de Manila, Reina de las Flores and the most significant Rosa Mistica.

Participating designers are Francis Calaquian, Johnny Abad, Delby Bragais, Vivo Nazareth, Joel Escober, Jerome Ang, Jontie Martinez, Richard Papa, Rholand Roxas, Gener Gozum, Ivan de la Cruz, Rikko Escaro, Lito Perez, Edna Encarnacion, Bumbee Ramos, Nholie Pilapil, Dennis Sayat, Dimple Lim, Julius Ornum, Rommel del Valle, Buddy Reyes, Raoul Ramirez, Russel Torres, and Angelo Estera.

Guest designers are Pepe Quitco, Nicky Martinez, Pencil Diestra, Bias Aligno, and Glenn Lopez.



Leading the festivities are Durano, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, Unilever chair/CEO Sanjiv Metha as *hermanos mayores* and Honorary Consul to Guatemala Mellie Ablaza as *hermana mayor*.

The festival will begin with the presentation of the *sagalas* at 5 p.m. at the Rajah Soliman Park in Malate. The procession will pass through the north bound lane of Roxas Boulevard and end at Puerta Real, Intramuros.

After the procession, a dinner show hosted by Leo Martinez and Nina Cabral will be held featuring Menchu Lauchengco, Pinoy PopStar Kids of GMA 7, Arturo and Evangeline Orosco, Gintong Lahi Dance Company of St. Francis of Assisi College System and Sonny Francisco.

Bench fragrances will provide various floral scents for the evening.

Tickets cost P600 each. Call 5277082 and 5238411 local 187.

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hbc — Free gift with a minimum purchase of Php125.00

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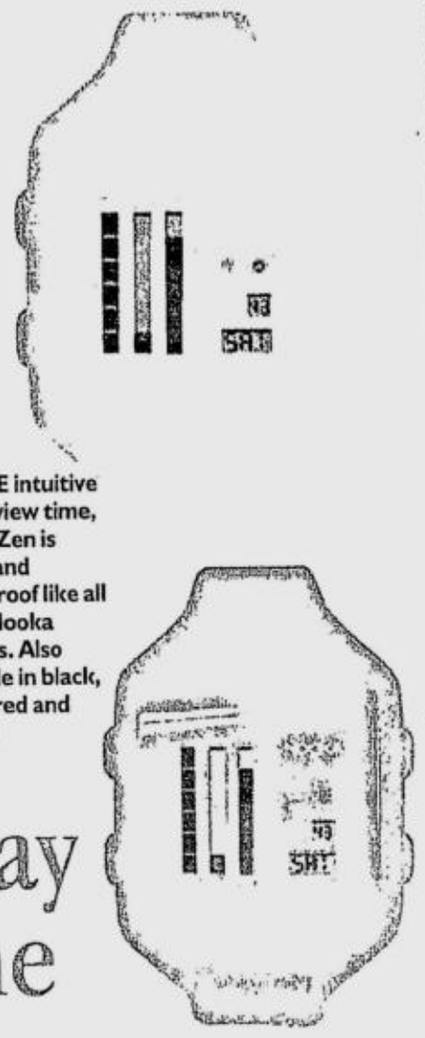
NOOKA Zot shows hours as progression of 12 dots. Also available in black, red, blue and yellow.



A MORE intuitive way to view time, Nooka Zen is unisex and waterproof like all other Nooka watches. Also available in black, white, red and orange

A ... way to tell time

THE NEW WATCH ON the block is called Nooka, a creation an award-winning artist and designer Matthew Waldman who has 15 years experience crafting identities and design systems for clients.

While staring at a large wall clock in a London hotel, Waldman was struck by how few options there were for displaying time. He then created some new ideas and proceeded to patent their originality.

Waldman came up with the linear and graphic representations of time featured in Nooka watches. The visual mass increases as time passes, giving weight to an ephemeral and abstract concept.

Drawing upon an instinctual sense of time, Nooka watches push design and functionality forward by exploring time's most basic elements. Nooka structures the presentation of time in a way that highlights the most important information, creating a more natural awareness of time.

The name comes from the native pronunciation of "New Yorker," with a focus on "new" to express the core value of innovation

The Nooka Zen presents the passage of hours in progressive linear bars. As time moves, visual mass increases, giving weight to an abstract concept.

The Nooka Zot displays hours as a progression of 12 dots, minutes flow along the horizontal line below. The smallest window, which toggles to show the date, counts seconds.

Nooka watches can be found at fine retailers across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia; including Barney's New York, the MoMA Design Store and Catalogue, and Selfridges in London.

In the Philippines, Nooka watches are sold at Rafael's Jewelery in Shangri-La Plaza; My Diamond in Glorietta 4; and My Tempo in SM North Edsa and Gateway Araneta.

THE ONE
by Dolce & Gabbana

Darkly passionate fragrance

THE ONE BY DOLCE & GABBANA IS A women's fragrance that evokes passion, glamour and luxury.

Encased in a classic rectangular flacon with a twist cap reminiscent of a gold bar, the fragrance opens with a modern interpretation of fresh fruits—juicy peach, delicate lychee and mouth-watering mandarin, lightly contrasted by smooth vanilla.

The scent's core is a mix of contemporary and traditional florals—the rare Madonna Lily blended with classic white flowers jasmine and muguet. A deep and sensual base reveals the earthy quality of vetyver and the intensity of labdanum, combined with dry ambery notes.

The One by Dolce & Gabanna is available at leading department stores nationwide at 30 ml (P3,050), 50 ml (P4,350) and 75 ml (P5,650).

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One of tinseltown's busiest stars, Toni Gonzaga, sets time to relax and bond with her mom, Mommy Pinty Gonzaga, in way they both truly enjoy: visiting a spa. It's a treasured moment, seeing a very busy Toni and equally hectic (mom and talent manager) Mommy Pinty gets a well-deserved pampering inside a spa. This month, BlueWater Spa pays tribute to all mothers who deserve to get a break this Mother's Day.

And Mommy Pinty, who's been supporting and taking care of daughter Toni through the years, deserve nothing but the best this Mother's Day. She says Toni can be the sweetest when it comes to remembering people on special days. It may not be something really grandiose, but something as simple as "going to church, eating out, and watching movies" on a Mother's Day means a lot to her. "*Simple lang talaga kami. Nakuha ni Toni sa 'kin yan.*" she says.

On a Mother's day, Toni says it's a simple yet thoughtful celebration for her Mom. She greets her mom, treats her out for lunch or dinner and buys her a cake. But while Toni discloses she's not big on giving material gifts, her Mom says otherwise."*Lagi siyang may bigay, especially bags pag galing siyang abroad, kasi i love bags. And when she comes home, may bitbit laging pasalubong na food. Very thoughtful.*"

If there's one thing mommy and daughter shares in common, it's the love for spa and the pampering that they get from massages, facials and body scrubs. Both Toni and Mommy Pinty love BlueWater Spa's Botanical Milk and Rice Scrub. They both vouch for the silky smooth feel of the skin after the treatment. Toni also goes for shiatsu massage which she so needs after a very tiring day. Mommy Pinty on the other hand, is a big fan of hand treatment, hilot, facials, Swedish massage and mud wrap body scrub."*Tina-try ko lahat. Atleast once a week pumupunta ako sa BlueWater. Yun na ang relaxation ko. Especially pag ang dami kong binabasa at nire-review na contracts.*"

Mommy Pinty and daughter Toni Gonzaga

Indeed, Blue Water Spa is the perfect treat for all mothers who deserved to be babied and pampered after all. This Mother's Day, make all moms feel extra special.

Check out Blue Water Spa's Mother Day promo packages. 20% off on
Package A (from P1,900 to P1,520: Whitening Facial Radiance, Foot Reflex and Back Massage)
Package B (from P2,000 to P1,600: Facial Collagen Revival and Foot Spa)
Package C (from P2,800 to P2,240: Diamond Peel and Japanese Gingko Extract Facial).
Promo period: May 2 to May 30, 2007.

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At an amazing 20% discount.

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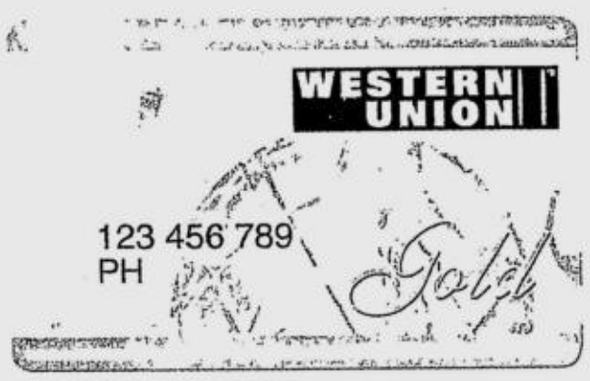

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WOW — Php 500 discount on WOW Magic Sing Microphone

Just present your card together with the discount coupon at the indicated establishment. Call 888-1200 (Metro Manila), 02-888-1200 outside Metro Manila (NDD rates apply) or 1-800-1-888-1200 (PLDT toll-free, or 1-800-9-888-1200 (Globelines toll-free) for more information.

*Discount coupons available at select Western Union Agent locations. Terms and Conditions apply. See flyers for details. Promo duration is from April 9, 2007 - June 30, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1360, Series of 2007.

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A fiesta of choices for shoppers at 6 SM malls

SM Supermalls – from up north in Baguio City to down south in Davao City – welcome the festive month of May with an impressive six-mall event on the weekend of May 4, 5 and 6.

Participating in the simultaneous May 4, 5 and 6 sale event are SM Megamall, SM City Bacoor, SM City Batangas, SM City Clark, and SM City Davao.

The sale offers shoppers a smorgasbord of choices on a wide array of stores, merchandise and services marked down to as low as half their regular prices.

3 day SALE

may 4 • 5 • 6

Mall hours: **10am - 10pm**

SM SUPERMALLS

MEGAMALL • BACOOR • BATANGAS

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1608, Series of 2007 — Per DTI-BATS Permit No. 104, Series of 2007

BAGUIO • CLARK • DAVAO

Per DTI-BGT Permit No. 039, Series of 2007 — Per DTI-PGA Permit No. 056, Series of 2007 — Per DTI-DCFD Permit No. 076, Series of 2007

FILL UP RAFFLE COUPON OR TEXT SM TO 2366*

& GET A CHANCE TO WIN 1 OF 20 XTREME VERSION 9 VIDEOKE MICROPHONE PER MALL

with every P500 single receipt purchase

Applicable to Megamall, Bacoor and Clark only
See mechanics poster for details

2 ways to win in only 3 days

Every ₱500 single-receipt purchase at any participating anchor store or mall establishment entitles shoppers to join the raffle-cum-text promotion for a chance to win one of 20 Xtreme Version 9 Videoke Microphones.

Where to Go for Lifestyle Shopping

SM Megamall is the ideal one-stop lifestyle shopping destination. Besides the wide range of merchandise and services, SM Megamall also features the following:

- **Cyberzone**, the coolest place to get wired to the latest gadgets and gizmos.
- **SM Cinema** has *Spider-Man 3*, summer's biggest movie, now showing.
- **SM Foodcourt**, where there's always something yummy for everyone. Now thru May 20, get the chance to win a **trip to Hong Kong Disneyland** with any P81 or P91 value meal purchase inclusive of a 568 ml Pepsi product. Draw date is on May 21.
- **SM Ice Skating Rink**, where you can learn the basics of ice skating thru the MILO Summer Sports Clinic (enrolment is ongoing).
- **SM Bowling Center**, where you can have a grand time with "Summer Bowl for Kids," 15 years old and below. For only P150, play 2 games and get 4 Free video game arcade tokens. Learn the basics of bowling at the MILO Summer Sports Clinic (enrolment is ongoing).
- **Mall hours will be extended up to 11 pm on May 4 and 5.**

One-Stop Family Shopping

SM City Bacoor offers exciting half-price markdowns during its May 4, 5 and 6 sale event. Participating stores include **Toy Kingdom, Watsons, SM Supermarket, Ace Hardware, SM Appliance Center, Surplus Shop** and **SM Department Store**.

On-going at **SM Cinema** Bacoor is the "One, Two, Three, FREE" promo. This offer is valid only during the 3-DAY SALE. Watch *Spider - Man 3*, now showing.

Grand Fireworks Display

SM City Batangas will light up the summer nights with the grandest fireworks display ever at 8 pm on May 4, 5 and 6. Shoppers and their families can go to the open parking area near the Banco de Oro entrance where they can better view the fireworks spectacle.

Hot Finds at Cool Prices

SM City Baguio offers residents and *bakasyonistas* choice buys at great discounts of up to 50% on selected merchandise including apparel, health and beauty products, home furnishings, supermarket items and do-it-yourself tools. All these - and more - are yours for the choosing as you shop in a picturesque hilltop setting.

Central Luzon's Shopping Paradise

SM City Clark offers super finds for discriminating shoppers... quality merchandise, fabulous eat-out options, and fun happenings.

Visit SM City Clark's **Cyberzone** for the latest gadgets, gizmos, mobile phones and other cool techie stuff! All up for grabs at the 'Zone!

At **SM Foodcourt**, *Dine & Play* with the whole family and instantly get 2 free rides or games at **Worlds of Fun** when you purchase at least P150 from any SM Foodcourt tenant. Hurry, promo ends June 30!

Join *Pepsi's Ring-Your-Prize* with any food purchase from SM Foodcourt and get a chance to shoot for your prize. Premium items from Pepsi are at stake.

At **SM Cinema**, catch the screening of *Spider-Man 3*, now showing . Buy two movie tickets and get one FREE on your next visit.

Weekend Fun Down South

Enjoy shopping at **SM City Davao**, offering lots of items on discount from SM affiliates and mall stores.

Eat out in **SM Foodcourt** or the mall's many restaurants in between your shopping.

Watch *Spider-Man 3* with the whole family, now showing. Shopping fun extended up to 12 midnight on May 5. Catch The Company's *bossa nova* repertoire from their latest CD on May 6.

Reserved Parking

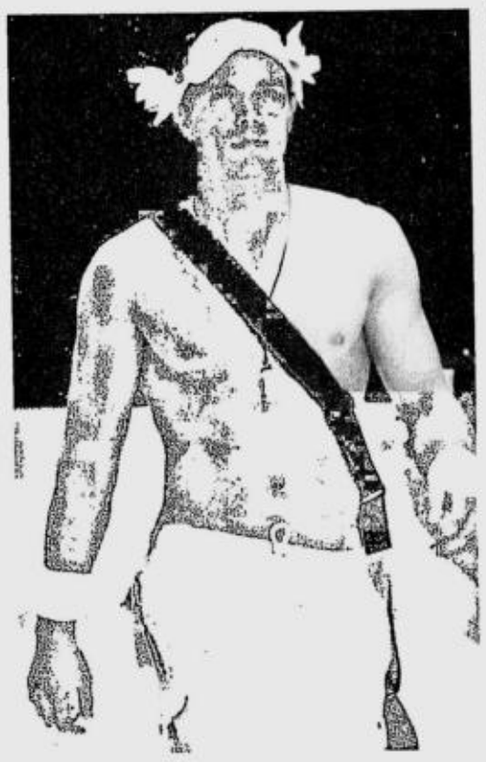
SM Advantage and **SM Prestige** members can avail of reserved parking spaces on a first-come, first-served basis at SM Megamall, SM City Bacoor, SM City Batangas, SM City Clark, SM City Baguio and SM City Davao during the 3-DAY SALE.

LEFT: Hot, hot, hot summer fashion by Bench during the Club GA party, day 1 of the three-day mega launch of GA Sky Suites; GA VP for finance Dexter Lee, Philippine vice president Noli de Castro, GA president Delfin Lee, and GA VP for international sales Divine Lee

Sky Suites launched to high heavens

LEAVE IT TO GLOBE ASIAtique Realty Holdings Corporation, one of the Philippines' top real estate developers, to come up with a smashing three-day mega launch to celebrate its newest project, the GA Sky Suites, soon to be the tallest edifice along Edsa.

The three-day event was built around three concepts: Club GA, Fashion High with GA, and Viva Las VeGAs.



COLORFUL and cutting-edge characterize the hip-and-happening looks of the Bench Summer Fashion show during the GA Sky Suites launch.

DREAMS ARE MEANT TO BE LIVED.

Get your little piece of heaven on the GA Sky Suites. Big spaces, comfortable ambiance, in high-end location. Fully furnished with a private garden, all for you to call your own.

Project completion is slated by 2010. Call us now to find out more about the GA Sky Suites' high-tech corporate lowrise and residential condominium.

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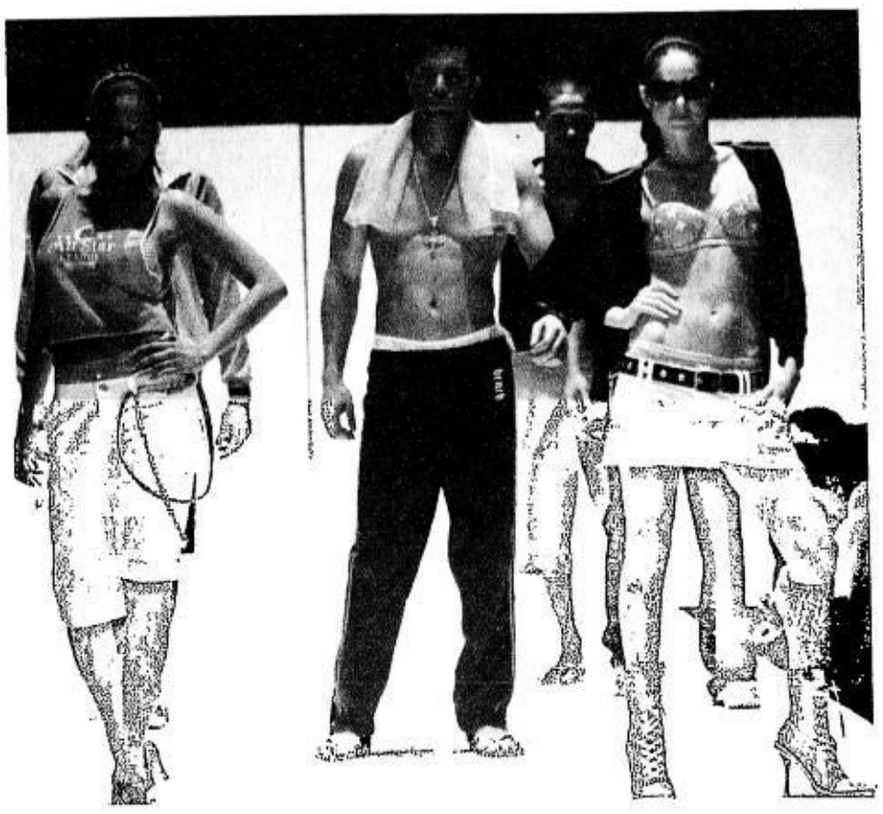
COLORFUL, hip, cutting-edge characterize the looks of the Bench Summer Fashion show as hosted by GA during the GA Sky Suites Launch.

FROM preppy to metallic, sexy to sassy—fashion that's fit for the summer by Bench shown during the GA Sky Suites launch



Celeb

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ELEGANCE, structure, and refinement characterize Inno Sotto's clean lines and architectural collection staged on Day 2 of GA Sky Suites' three-day mega launch.

LOVELY Romulo, Secretary Alberto Romulo, GA president Delfin Lee and GA VP for international sales Divine Lee

Sotto soars high

Day 2 was an evening of glamour and grandeur as Globe Asiatique hosted an enchanting fashion gala featuring the high couture of Inno Sotto.

The night's spotlight was set on the most sophisticated address in high-rise living. Only the elite glided into this red-carpet event hosted by Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Maurice Arcache.

Fashionable women such as Bea Valdes, Mandy Santos, Anna Angara, Sigalit Djemal, Mia Borromeo and Vicki Belo were present. Also seen were Secretary Alberto Romulo, Lovely Romulo and Mons Romulo-Tantoco.

Embodying the GA lifestyle, Sotto revealed structural and exquisite pieces inspired by the GA Sky Suites' modern design. In the collection were short and easy pieces, that were modern, sleek, and elegantly understated.

"The silhouettes were away from the body, very clean and contemporary. Everything was pared down," said Sotto. His top-brass audience had a treat with the day-wear and the evening gowns that came in shades of bone, beige and camel, and in luxe fabrics such as silk, organza and crepe de chine.

Manila's most fashionable lounged at the lap of luxury prepared by Nuvo of Louie Ysmael. Cool cocktails were provided by Margarita Gaita Fores.

ARCHIE Rodriguez, Sigalit Djemal, Inno Sotto and Bea Valdes

TESSA Valdes and Mandy Santos

KRISTINE, Olive and Florence Chan

GA CORPORATE imaging specialist Jojie Dingcong and chef du jour Margarita Fores

DOODY Tuason

CHESKA Garcia

DAWN Balagot

VICKI Belo

MARIPI Muscat, Maurice Arcache and Debbie Tan

ARLY Palomo, Sigalit Feldman, Alicia Dabdah, Djemal and Mia Borromeo

GA PRESIDENT Delfin Lee, GA vice president for international sales Divine Lee, ABS-CBN Foundation's senior program officer (PR and Marketing unit) Paul Vincent Mercado, and Epi Quizon

Vegas fun for a good cause

Day 3 saw stars dotting every inch of Globe Asiatique's magnificent tent. The top celebs went there for an afternoon of poker in the event known as Viva Las VeGAs.

In the spirit of community involvement, celebrity guests brought their best to the tables with special charity chips. Playing poker for a good cause were Michael de Mesa, Ryan Eigenman, Epi Quizon, Boy2 Quizon, Derek Ramsay, Archie Alemania, Victor Basa, AJ Dee, Carlos Agassi, Say Alonzo, Joross Gamboa, Gemma Fitzgerald, Nikki Valdez, Denise Joaquin, Kathleen Hermosa, Carla Humphries, Gadd Grilon, Janus del Prado, Kristopher Peralta, Rico Barrera, Jayson Gainza and Ayanna Oliva.

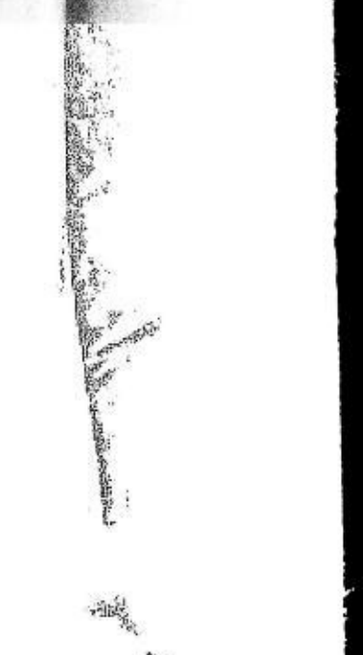
Epi Quizon emerged winner.

"Globe Asiatique has always been an advocate of charity work so this third day was relevant to our ideal and was a chance to give back to the community," said Divine Lee, VP for international sales.

Globe Asiatique later donated a check of P500,000 to ABS-CBN Foundation Inc.

The three-day launch of GA Sky Suites truly brought guests a taste of the GA lifestyle. They discovered that beyond the loft-type units, world-class amenities and lush gardens, Globe Asiatique offers a home close to the stars.

The mega launch party was produced by Jojie Dingcong, corporate imaging specialist of Globe Asiatique. It was directed by Robby Carmona.



MARY Lee, wife of Globe Asiatiqu

SIMPLY divine is Sotto's touch with this show-stoppi

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STYLE

tial sizzlers

Manila's most renowned and hip- g crowd converge at the GA Sky om.

as hosted by Tim Yap, Tessa Prieto- rielle Rodriguez. The well-crafted y giant screens that simultaneously ges of the Globe Asiatique audiovi- ion. Guests got in touch with their ky Suites offered a truly sensorial computer-simulated surround- the architectural concept of GA Sky guests right in the virtual world of opment. The launch of GA Sky l, marked Quezon City, where the would be put up, as "the City of the

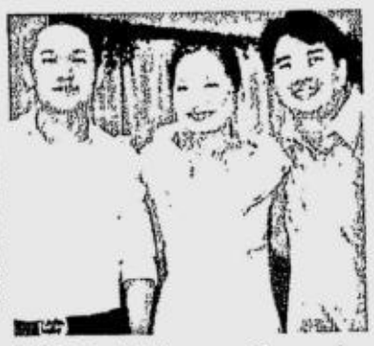
ment followed as Bench held a show J Summer fashion collection. Groov- s of Embassy Superclub, the coun- equins paraded down the ramp. Summer collection was edgy and for this hot summer season. Refresh- as lime green, sunny yellow and tan- ted the palette. The beach feel of the enhanced when the models walked , holding kickboards and towels, and ories such as headsets and radios. The other pieces had a "bike rider" theme, with motor helmets and jackets that complemented gold, silver, and bronze shades.

The event was hosted by real-estate visionary Delfin Lee, son Dexter Lee, vice president for finance; and daughter Divine Lee, who helms the company's marketing and international sales. Special guests included Vice President Noli de Castro, TV host Willie Revillame, actress Cheska Garcia, designers Anton Mendoza and Charina Sarte, and Shu Uemura's Tessa Dragon and Tina Tinio.

DANIELLE Lee and Ryan Singson

JILL Gerodias and Tessa Dragon

GA marketing director Patrick Lyttle, Boom Sason, Chari Sarte and Nino Barbers



KINO Cudal, Florence Chan and Willie Revillame

TESSA Valdes and Atom Henares

ELERY and Maui Herera

JOHN Taruc, Michelle Taruc, Jenny Santos, Joel Santos and Jonathan Santos

SASON and Alta Redor

NATASHA Aslanian and Nicole Jacinto

g number.

president Delfin Lee, with daughter Dianne Lee

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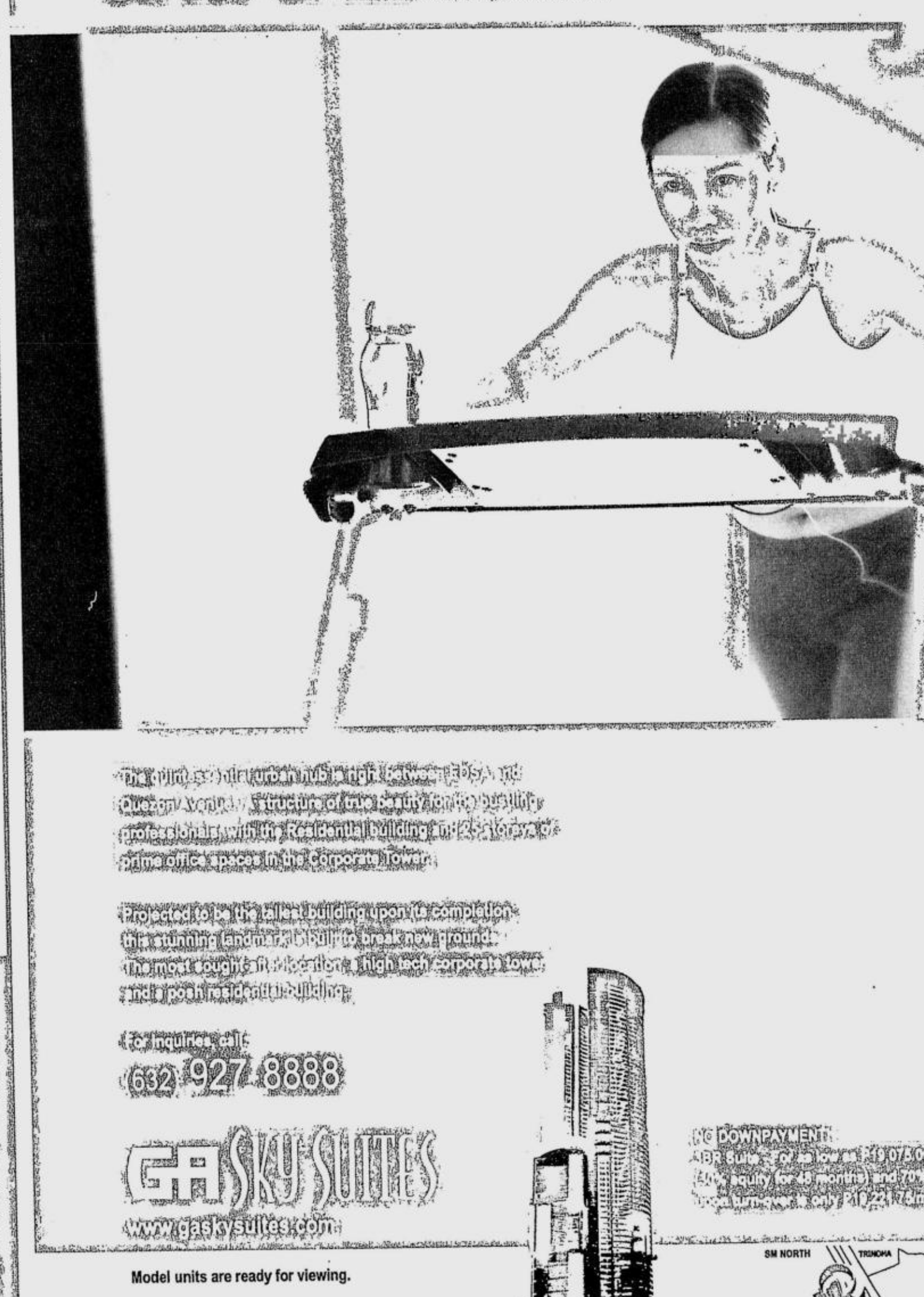

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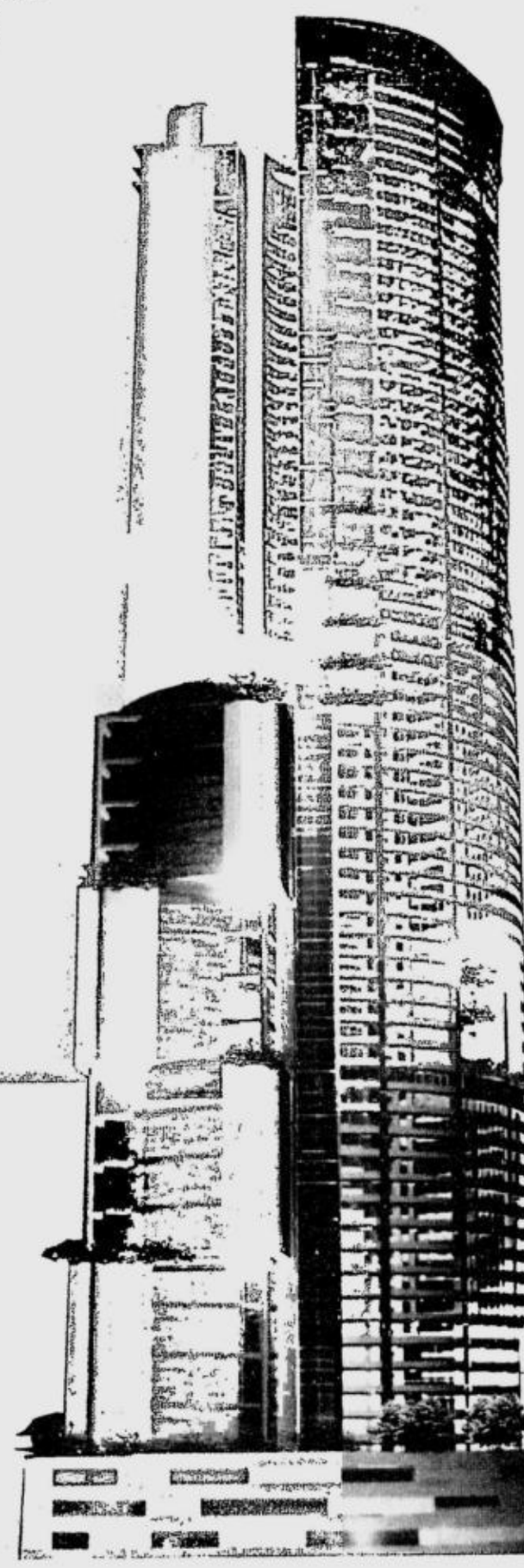

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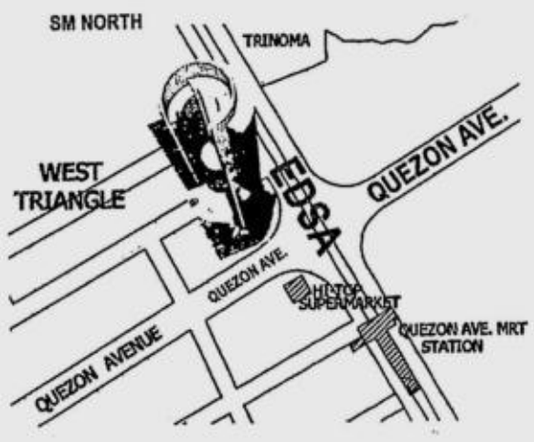

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph **Website:** www.inquirer.net/entertainment

New 'Indiana Jones' star talks about his childhood

LOS ANGELES—"THERE'S something you experience as a child when you watch your dad go through heroin withdrawals."

That's how actor **Shia LaBeouf** (pronounced Shy-uh La-Buff) described his lost childhood in a recent interview. As he turns 21 next month, is a happy ending in the offing?

Shia just bagged the role of a lifetime: Steven Spielberg has chosen him to play the son or sidekick of Indiana Jones (**Harrison Ford**) in the fourth and much-awaited installment of the blockbuster action-adventure movie series. And Shia's thriller movie, "Disturbia," has been No. 1 in the US box office for three consecutive weekends now. In addition, he stars in **Michael Bay**'s big-budgeted "Transformers" and is one of the voice talents in Sony Pictures' animated movie, "Surf's Up."

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

The headline-making announcement of Shia's casting came a few days after this interview. He relished the press curiosity on whether he has indeed landed the role that any young actor would kill to get. Asked about this casting rumor swirling at the time of this talk, the erstwhile child actor with dark, curly hair smiled and said, "It's good to be rumored to be in 'Indiana Jones IV' rather than 'Kangaroo Jack IV.'"

Welcome rumor

With a mischievous grin still on his face, the former star of Disney Channel shows quipped, "It's a rumor that I started on MySpace (laughter). No. But I'm enjoying the rumor. And I'm perpetuating it. I'm on the Internet as supersly14, typing, 'yeah, I heard that Shia is doing it definitely.'"

But he did talk about **Steven Spielberg**, who will again direct this latest "Indiana Jones" film and is the producer of "Disturbia" and "Transformers":

"When you meet Spielberg, you feel like you're part of his family because he's very welcoming. I'm sure you have all met him and know what I'm talking about. He's a very warm, gentle person who understands that he's an icon and he doesn't overwhelm you with it. He actually makes you feel like he's nervous every time you see him, which is insane."

Lucky charm

Shia added about the man who is turning out to be his lucky charm, "When you first get into this business, there are things you tell yourself, like one day you'll meet Spielberg or Scorsese. But it never comes to your mind that you'll actually work with Spielberg or go to dinner with him. My mother (Shayna LaBeouf) is Jewish. Spielberg means a lot to the Jewish community, the film community and people in general. It has been strange and earth shattering for my mother to see my name in the same sentence with Spielberg's. I come from five generations of artists who never got to this level so this is a big thing for her."

Over 100 actors reportedly auditioned for the lead role in "Disturbia," which is about a troubled teenager who suspects that his neighbor might be a serial killer. The movie's director, **D.J. Caruso**, impressed by Shia's audition tape, immediately sent it to Steven. After watching the tape, Steven told D.J. that he (D.J.) has found the next **Tom Hanks**. Asked to comment on Steven's prediction, Shia replied, "When Spielberg says you're the next Tom Hanks, that's like, come on, guy, just let me breathe for a second. It's a lot to live up to."

All of these breaks will make Shia a

NEW / G2

ROLE OF A LIFETIME. Shia LaBeouf has been chosen to play Indiana Jones' sidekick.

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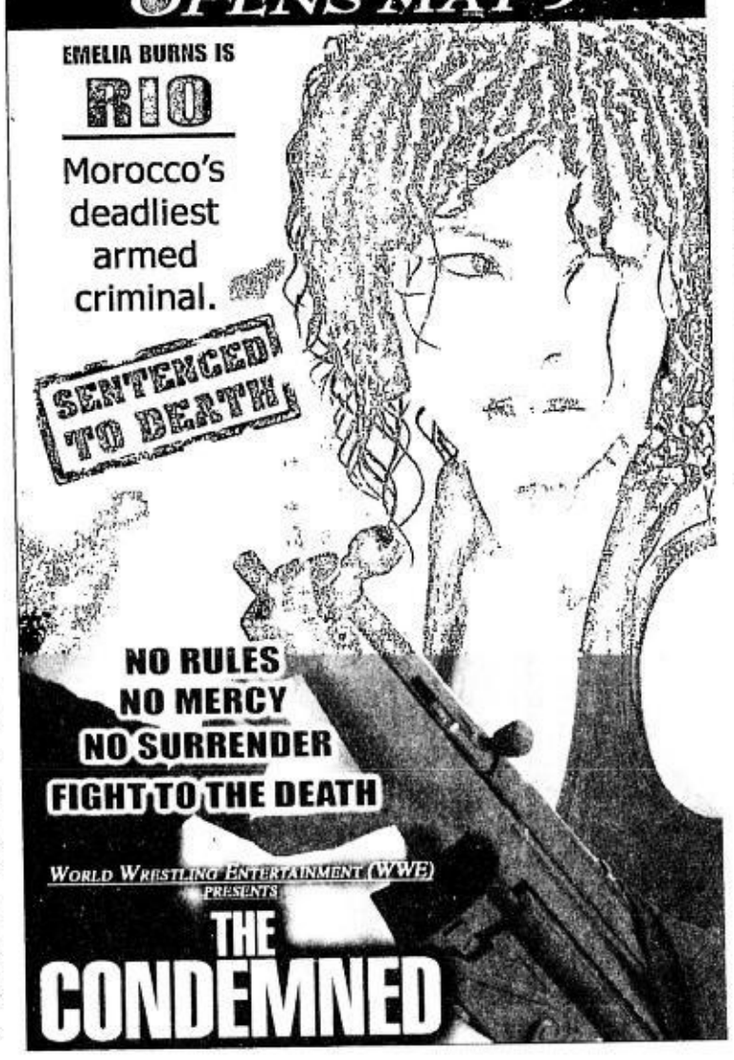

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Stars hold forth

ALL SHOW BIZ FANS SHOULD expect from their idols is a good performance. But some stars give more than that, going on to dispense advice about love, life, lust and other four-letter words.

Why are they so sure of themselves?

John Travolta speaks for all stars and starlets in Hollywood, Bollywood and Betchabygollywood: "I really resent it when people say actors are dumb. We're very well educated, especially in life and the real things!"

British sex bomb **Diana Dors** adds: "Actors are not stupid, but most actors can't be intellectuals—there isn't time! You either read books or you go out and entertain."

Having established that stars aren't empty between the ears and are therefore entitled to their own opinions, let's listen to some of them and—learn?

Joan Collins: "I never speak to my former lovers, except under hypnosis!"

Brad Pitt: "When I go out, I dress *down* so people will know I'm *not* trying to look my best—just showing up at an event is a real effort on my part."

Robert Redford: "Why do so many people want to live in Hollywood? If you stay in Beverly Hills too long, you turn into a Mercedes!"

Mary Astor: "Most men don't mature, they just grow taller."

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Yves Montard: "I think a man can have maybe three affairs while he is married. Three is the absolute maximum—after that, you're cheating!"

Katharine Hepburn: "Love your enemies. They're so stimulating!"

Belinda Carlisle: "If you have too much fame, you become a prisoner of your own success. What fun is that?!"

Matthew McConaughey: "To get my resources as an actor, I have to hang out with all sorts of people. I have to know, be in touch with and keep the pulse of people from every walk of life!"

Frank Sinatra: "You don't get over a broken heart, it never gets any easier. I understand, however, that playing one of my albums can help!"

Jackie Gleason: "I'm too busy to count sheep. If I have insomnia, I count *elephants*. That way, I don't have to count so many!"

W.C. Fields: "I never vote *for* anyone. I always vote *against*."

Pamela Anderson Lee: "Making love in the morning got me through morning sickness. I found I could be happy and upchuck at the same time."

Erica Jovy: "You see an awful lot of smart guys with dumb women, but you hardly ever see a smart woman with a dumb guy!"

Elayne Boosler: "You never see a man walking down the street with a woman who has a little pot belly and a bald spot!"

Unearthed

SIX finalists in Animal Planet's wildlife filmmaking competition are featured in its new four-part series, "Unearthed."

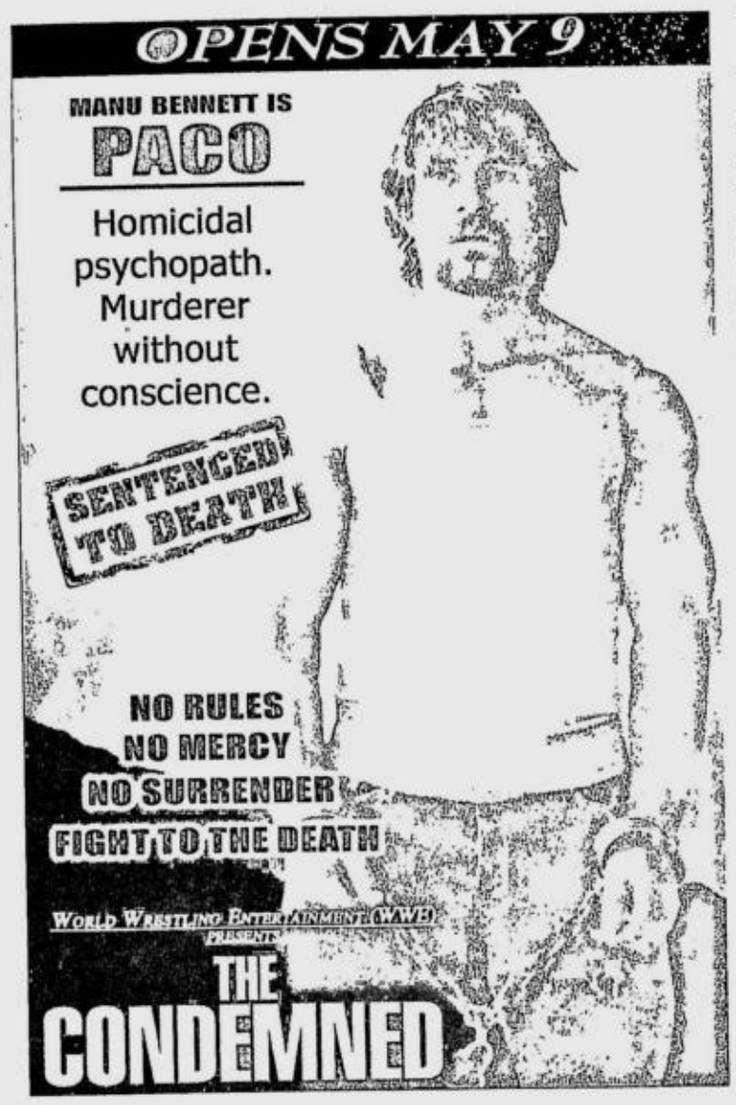
The training course was held at the award-winning Shamwan Game Reserve in South Africa, where they learned the essential skills and realities of creating a natural history documentary.

The first episode focused on the group being taught how to track and film animals. They also learned how to take aerial shots and how to film an action sequence capturing a herd of wild beasts.

Zodiac

DAVID Fincher ("Fight Club") has come up with a new thriller starring **Jake Gyllenhaal, Mark Ruffalo** and **Robert Downey, Jr.**

Titled "Zodiac," it's based on the true story of a serial killer who terrorized the San Francisco Bay area and taunted investigators for decades with his letters and ciphers.



New 'Indiana Jones' star talks about...

From page G1

more recognizable face in the next few years. At the Indie Spirit Awards last March, we stood behind him in the line to get in at the after-party. When a receptionist was stalling about letting him in (she obviously did not know him), we had to speak up and say, "He's Shia LaBeouf, the actor."

How Shia became an actor is a remarkable Hollywood story. At age 10, he looked for a talent agent in the Yellow Pages, called the guy, did a stand-up routine before this agent who liked what he saw and signed him up.

Not very paternal

Shia explained the circumstances that made it possible for him to land an agent at an age when other boys were still playing with Ninja Turtle toys. "I didn't grow up in a traditional home with traditional parents," he began. "My dad was a drug dealer. My mom sold pins and brooches. They weren't very paternal. They were my best friends. I was just very different. I didn't get grounded a lot. We didn't have a big house to get grounded in. We had four or five people living with us.

"My room was my mom and dad's room, too. We lived in the same room. They had a bed and then I had a bed right next to them so it was like a communal family house. It wasn't even a room. It was a section and my section had like Yogi Bear, Ninja Turtles and Transformers."

Mime artist

Of his father, Jeffrey LaBeouf, Shia revealed, "My dad was a rodeo clown aside from the other stuff. He dealt drugs when it was a bad time for us. It was the '80s and that's what people did in Echo Park (in LA) then. He's not proud of it but that's what our life was. Before that, he was a mime artist, as in the art form of Marcel Marceau, not the ones on Venice Beach.

"There's something you experience as a child when you watch your dad go through heroin withdrawals. You become a parent real quick. You grow up real fast. That stuff is painful to deal with. My dad is my best friend now but during that time. I didn't have parents. I had friends—they were hippies. But it was also rewarding. I wouldn't be here in this situation without them and they wouldn't be where they are now without me."

Shia added, "It was never, 'I'm the father, you're the son. You listen to what I have to say because I know more.' It was never, 'you can say this or you can't say that.' It was free love. It was therapeutic."

The actor is also grateful to his father in one important aspect: "I remember my dad saying, 'I don't want to pimp you. I know you want to do this actor thing but I don't want to be your pimp. I don't want to be a Hollywood parent.' You look at some of these kids in Hollywood—their parents are more into it than their kids are. It's disturbing and 'poisonous.'"

Exit door

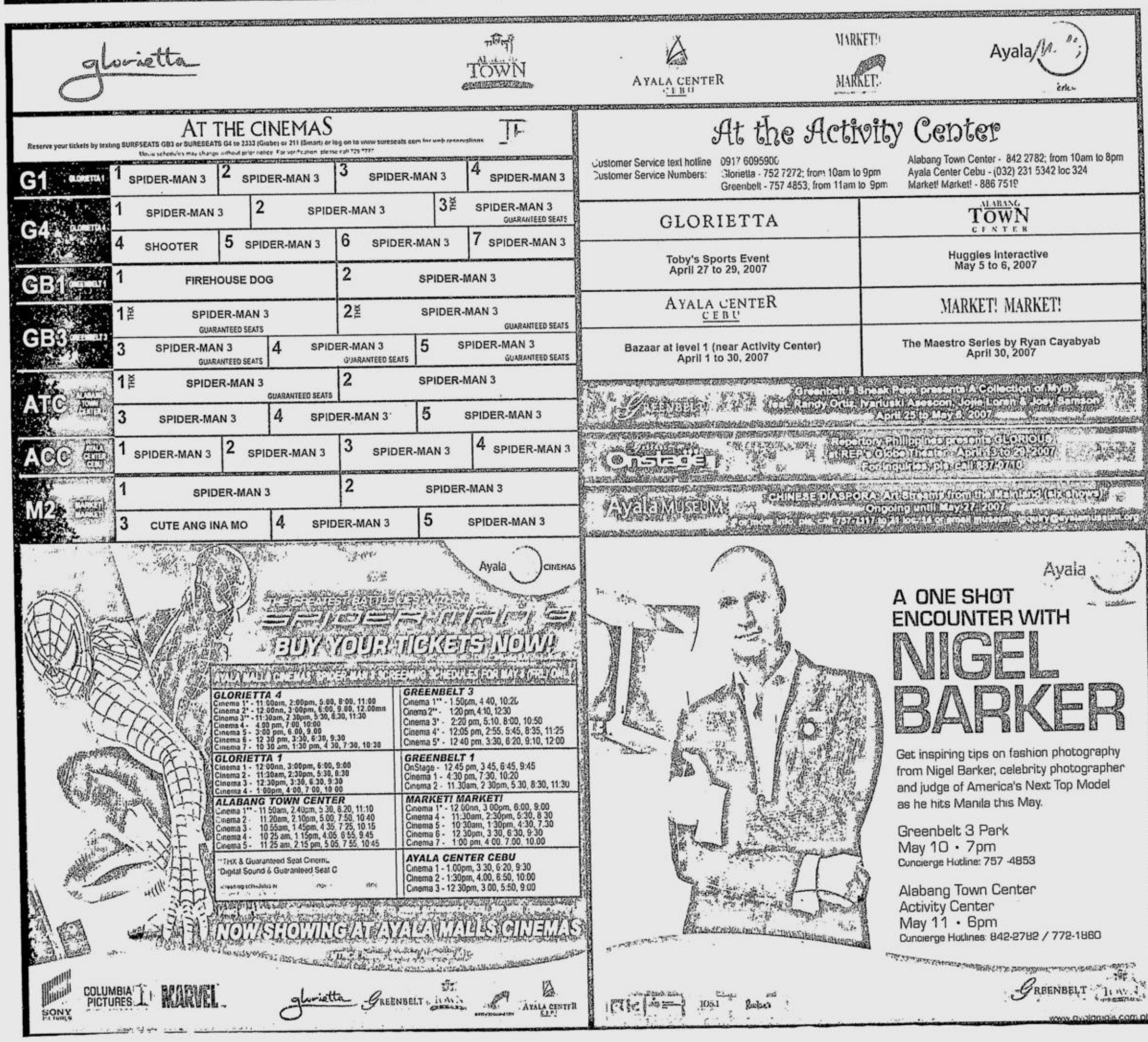
Asked how he has managed to stay away from drugs, Shia answered, "I've worked too hard to be where I am to mess with drugs. That's the exit door. If I do drugs, that's the end of my career. My hard work has not only created a good life for me but also for everyone around me and my family.

"A lot of kids get into drugs because they're curious. I never had the curiosity because I watched it. My parents are hippies and I'm 20. I've smoked weed but it's not something I'm addicted to or need. To say that I've never had a drink would be insane. I had a drink at my Bar Mitzvah, you know (laughter). But the truth is, I don't have it in me to want to go and party. I have like a lame life."

Well, his "lame life" is much better than his growing up days (he had "1986-2004," the lost childhood years, tattooed on his right wrist). "My family is living in a dream state now," proudly declared the son who bought a house for each of his parents, now divorced. He has his own house, too.

Last March, Shia received ShoWest's Male Star of Tomorrow in Las Vegas. "It was overwhelming," he said. "When you're getting the Star of Tomorrow Award, it's like a preliminary award for work that you haven't done. It's a lot to live up to. What happens if I'm on some cooking show next year? Are they going to take my award away? I have no idea so there's a lot of pressure that comes with the award, and then there's the 'Indiana Jones' thing."

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.



'Spider-Man 3' soundtrack

SPIN CITY

THE "SPIDER-MAN 3" original soundtrack, released by Venice, California-based label Record Collection, is now out in the market.

It includes all-new original songs from bands like Snow Patrol, The Killers, Yeah Yeah Yeah's, Jet, The Flaming Lips, Wolfmother and The Walkmen.

Its lead single is "Signal Fire," from multi-platinum UK artist Snow Patrol.

has been released by Universal Records on a 2007 repackaged Bonus AVCD Edition, with the new version of "Sana Maulit Muli" and "When I Hear Your Call."

MARK BAUTISTA

New album

Heartthrob Mark Bautista marks his return to the recording scene with his third studio album titled "Every Now And Then."

Released under Viva Records, the album is a collection of OPM and pop hits.

The carrier single is Angela Bofill's "Break It To Me Gently," re-interpreted as a tender piano ballad.

The album contains 13 songs, including Iwi Laurel's "Special Memory" and Rey Valera's "Naaalala Ka."

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SPIDER-MAN 3 G 11:40,2:40,5:40,8:40	FIREHOUSE DOG G 12:10,3:10,6:10,9:10	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 1:40,4:40,10:40

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MALL 5
1 SPIDERMAN 3 12:45 / 3:10 / 5:35 / 8:00
2 SPIDERMAN 3 1:20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35
3 SPIDERMAN 3 11:30 / 1:55 / 4:20 / 6:45 / 9:10
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4 SPIDER-MAN 3 MTRCB GP 1:30am, 2:30 5:30, 8:30, 11:30pm
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Buy your tickets now! Call 633-2227 for more details
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THEATRE MALL
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 SPIDERMAN 3 10:30, 1:20, 4:10 7:00, 9:50, 12:20 PG-13
CINEMA 2 SPIDERMAN 3 11:10, 2:00, 4:50 7:40, 10:30 PG-13
DOLBY DIGITAL
PROMENADE
CINEMA 3 SPIDERMAN 3 10:20, 1:05, 3:55 6:45, 9:35, 12:10 PG-13
CINEMA 4 SPIDERMAN 3 11:35, 2:25, 5:15 8:05, 10:50 PG-13
CINEMA 5 SPIDERMAN 3 10:50, 1:45, 4:35 7:25, 10:15 PG-13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. CINEMA HOTLINE (632) 724-4796
MUSIC HALL MUSEUM
May 04, 2007 HALE 8:00 PM
May 5, 11 & 12, 2007 Rock the Vote " The Repeat " 8:00 PM
May 18, 2007 CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA 8:00 PM
May 19 & 26, 2007 OGIE ALCASID & SITTI 8:00 PM
THEATRE ONE
EVERY MONDAY JUNE 15, 2007 DANCE NIGHT Champion of the World (Jed Madela) 7:00 PM 8:30 PM
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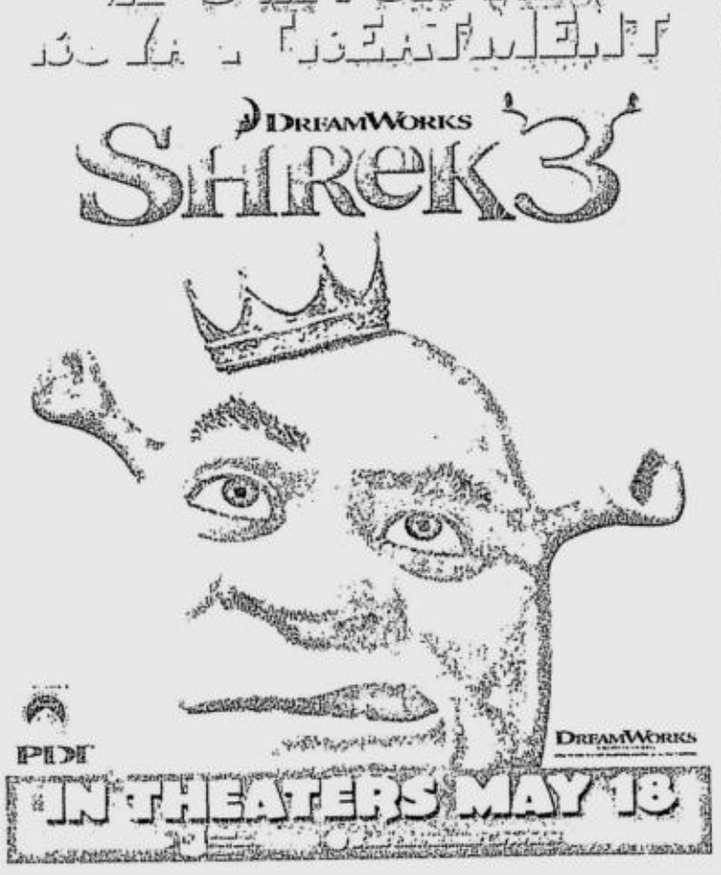
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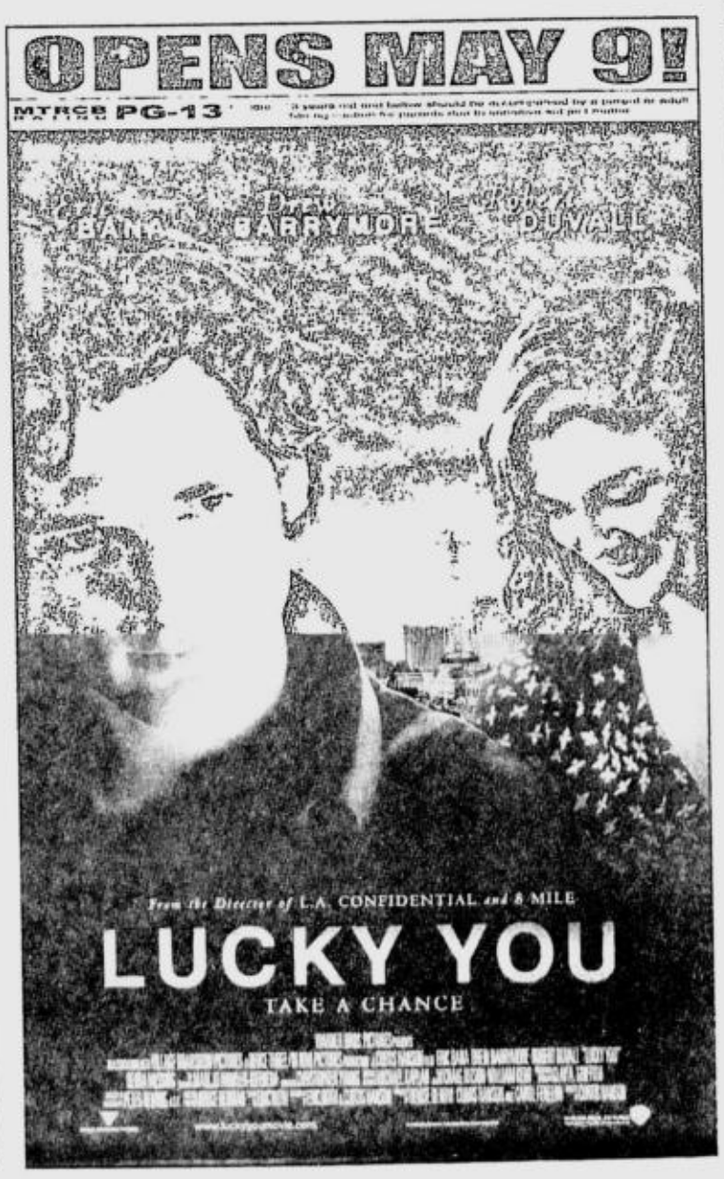
DREAMWORKS
IN THEATERS MAY 18

OPENS MAY 9!
MTRCB PG-13

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NCC
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

stmall
(Mandaluyong) tel 7266150
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 RESERVED

metropolitan
www.chrisbeauty.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504295, 5433994
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 PREMONTION

THEATRES
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3

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Pacific Mall Lucena Tel: (042) 660-5271
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
RESRVED
RESRVED

Filinvest
FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE SHOOTER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Blue
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 THE SHOOTER

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
4 SATANICA

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasig) tel 633.3290 / 633.3274
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE SHOOTER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4445346)
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5), Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
3 SPIDER-MAN 3

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 987.1729
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795 3320
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
2 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 OBSESSION
3 PLEASE CALL
4 PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SATANICA
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Berma Cinema
(Bacoor) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3

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GALLERIA

1 SPIDER-MAN 3 • THX
1.15 4:05 6:55 9:45

2 SPIDER-MAN 3
11:10 2:00 4:50

3 SPIDER-MAN 3
10.55 1:45 4:35 7:25 10:15

4 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:45 3 35 6:25 9:15

5 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

6 SPIDER-MAN 3
1:00 3:50 6:40 9.30

7 PAN'S LABYRINTH
12:00 2:30 5.00 7:30 10:00

8 indieSine: NUMBALIKDIWA
1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30

9 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

10 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

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ALBERT MARTINEZ!

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GERMITA

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
10:20 1:10 4:10 7:05 10:00

2 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
PAN'S LABYRINTH
12:35 2:50 5:05
7:20 10:00

5 FIREHOUSE DOG
SHOOTER
12:30 2:50 5:10
7:30 10:00

3 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:15 3:10 6:05 9:00

6 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:35 3:30 6:25 9:20

4 SHOOTER
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 SPIDER-MAN 3
11:55 2:50 5:45 8:40

METRO EAST

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:30 3:10 5:50 8:30

5 SPIDER-MAN 3
3:40 6:20 9:00

2 SPIDER-MAN 3
1:30 4:10 6:50 9:30

6 SPIDER-MAN 3
3:40 6:20 9:00

3 SPIDER-MAN 3
10:30 1:30 4:10 6:50

7 SPIDER-MAN 3
1:00 3:40 6:20

4 SPIDER-MAN 3
11:30 2:10 4:50 7:30

8 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES Ticket Price: P91 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3

4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3

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12:50 3:30 8:50

2 SPIDER-MAN 3
12:10 2:50 5:30 8:10

3 SPIDER-MAN 3
2:10 5:00 7:40

4 SPIDER-MAN 3
11:00 1:40 4:30 7:10

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907 **LIPA** (043) 312-5870

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE REAPING
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3

DASMARINAS **ANGELES** (045) 892-2348

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

IMUS (046) 471-8186 **STARMILLS** (045) 875-1927

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SHOOTER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3

BACOLOD (034) 441-0459 **ILOILO** (033) 336-8070

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 RESERVE
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 PATHFINDER
6 SPIDER-MAN 3

1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
6 PATHFINDER

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IMAX
SPIDERMAN 3
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10:30AM 1:30PM 4:30PM
7:30PM 10:30PM
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1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 THE REAPING/ SPIDERMAN 3
4 THE SHOOTER/ SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

PREMIERE CINEMA
SPIDERMAN 3

CENTERSTAGE
SPIDERMAN 3

THE PODIUM

CINEMA 1
SPIDERMAN 3

CINEMA 2
SPIDERMAN 3
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
6 SPIDERMAN 3 / FIREHOUSE DOG
7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 PAN'S LABYRINTH/ SPIDERMAN 3
9 SPIDERMAN 3/ PERFECT STRANGER
10 THE SHOOTER/ SPIDERMAN 3
11 SPIDERMAN 3/ GRAY MATTERS
12 SPIDERMAN 3

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 PAN'S LABYRINTH
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 THE SHOOTER
6 SPIDERMAN 3
7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 SPIDERMAN 3
9 SPIDERMAN 3
10 SPIDERMAN 3
11 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
12 FIREHOUSE DOG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 THE SHOOTER
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 WILD HOGS
7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
9 SPIDERMAN 3
10 SPIDERMAN 3
11 SPIDERMAN 3
12 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 SPIDERMAN 3
9 PAN'S LABYRINTH
10 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 THE SHOOTER
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 SPIDERMAN 3
7 PAN'S LABYRINTH
8 THE SHOOTER
9 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
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7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 SPIDERMAN 3
9 SPIDERMAN 3
10 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
11 PAN'S LABYRINTH
12 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 SPIDERMAN
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
4 SPIDERMAN 3

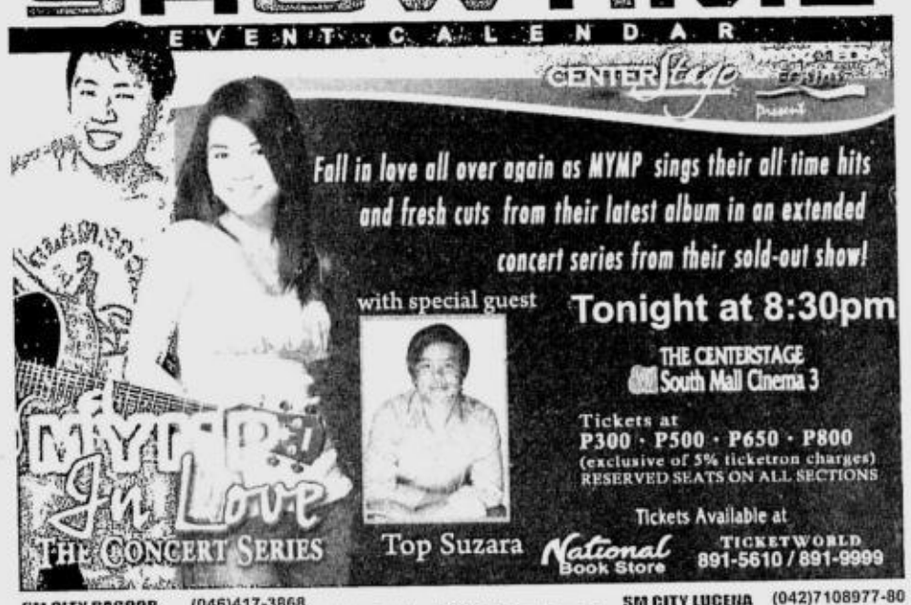
SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR



SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 SPIDERMAN 3
7 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
8 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
7 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
4 SPIDERMAN 3

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)8537681-85

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
6 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187

1 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3
6 SPIDERMAN 3
7 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
8 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 THE SHOOTER
5 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
6 SPIDERMAN 3
7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6107838-39

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 SPIDERMAN 3

SM CITY DACOLOD (034) 708 1010

1 SPIDERMAN 3
2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 SPIDERMAN 3
4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

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*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTINGS, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROUNDUP

P58.6M gross for Spidey on opening day

COLUMBIA PICTURES' "Spider-Man 3" pulled off the biggest opening day and best single-day record on Tuesday with a P58.6-million nationwide gross.

This was announced by Victor R. Cabrera, general manager of Columbia Pictures which distributed the film.

The opening day figures of "Spider-Man 3" are twice as bigger as "Spider-Man 2's" nationwide first-day gross in 2004 at P28.8 million, and are 278 percent higher than that of the first "Spider-Man" in 2002 at P16.4 million.

In Mega Manila, "Spider-Man 3" posted a smash P45.6-million opening day gross in 302 screens and 61 locations.

Outside Mega Manila, provincial moviegoers spent P12.9-million in 150 screens and 21 locations—,breaking all existing records in the same demographic.

"Spider-Man 3" reunites Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst and director Sam Raimi from the first two blockbuster adventures.

Curtain call

Star World's glamorous drama, "Fashion House," reaches its conclusion on Sunday, May 6, at 10 p.m.

Starring '80s icons Bo Derek and Morgan Fairchild, the series reveals the good, the bad and the beautiful characters of a fictional world in Los Angeles' haute couture scene.

Its whirlwind story centered on the blind ambition, steamy affairs and vengeful schemes of Maria Gianni (Derek), Sophia Blakely (Fairchild), Michelle Miller (Natalie Martinez), William Blakely (Joel Berti) and Luke Gianni (Taylor Kinney) and a host of others, as they claw their way to the top of the fashion game or try to find true love.

Star World's "Fashion House" is also available on SkyCable, Cablelink and Parasat.

Rock bonanza

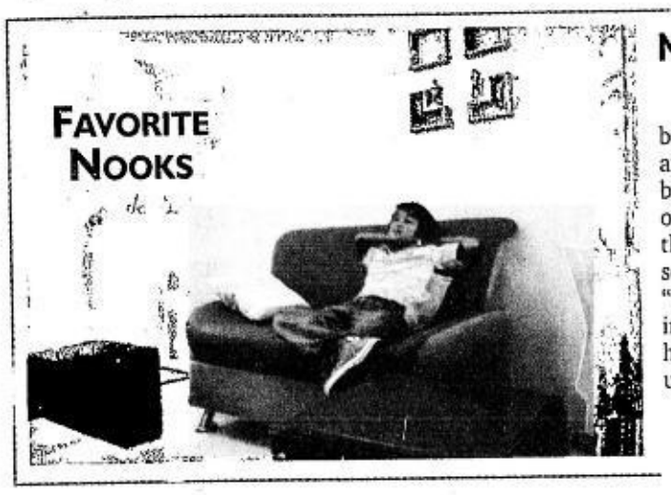
The Uptown Rascals from St. Louis University was voted by Baguio City students as their top choice for the opening act of "Chippy Gimikada," a concert for young rock 'n' rollers.

Now on its fifth year, the concert series kicked off in Baguio with Pedicab, Sandwich, Session Road and the city's young bands performing live.

The series goes on more campus and summer mall tours and local festivals.

For schedules, visit www.chippygimikada.com.

LIVING STARS
Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment
Editor Emmie G. Velarde
sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph



MAKISIG MORALES

I often hang out in the living room where my six brothers and sisters love to watch television shows and movies on DVD. A favorite of my 4-year-old brother Maliksi is "Super Inggo," parts one to eight on DVD. Sometimes I practice singing and dancing there, too. My siblings and I dance to my latest song "Breaking Up is Hard to Do" (from the CD "Mak and the Dudes"). I also play with my toy cars in the *sala*, which is actually bigger than our old house. We displayed my "Super Inggo" action figures there, but some fell and got cracked.

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTO BY ROMY HOMILLADA

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INSIDE

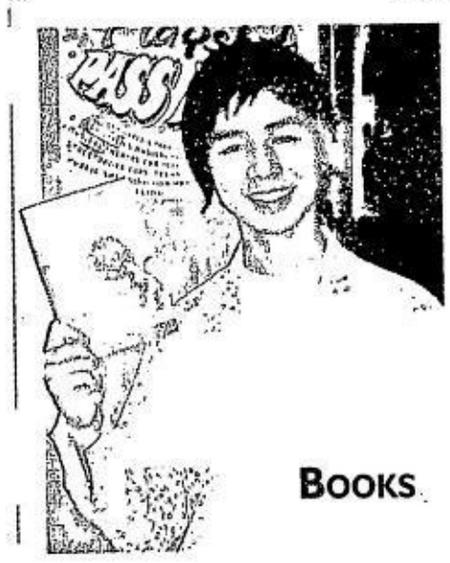
Bora's celebrity volleyball match/H2
Bamboo sings hope and solidarity /H2
FrancisM's love affair with photography /H4

BEVERLY VERGEL

TAIL TALES

We have three Chihuahuas: three-year-old Barge and Ginny and their one-year-old pup Sasha. I first fell in love with their breed after seeing Bruiser in "Legally Blonde." I like Chihuahuas because they're low-maintenance, easy to care for and intelligent. They have their own dog homes and their steel cages and nursing pens are imported from Taiwan. The vet makes house calls for them. When my 8-year-old daughter Sydney and I take them to the mall in their cute little costumes, they never cease to delight other people. Barge is handsome, a macho dog. Ginny, a purebred from Australia, is our very own Nicole Kidman. She exudes elegance. She has a microchip implanted in her nape, so she can be tracked down via GPS (Global Positioning System) anywhere in the world. Like her mom, Sasha's very regal with her pink nose and eyes.

Bayani San Diego Jr.



SAM CONCEPCION

BOOKS

How I love the book "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis. I first read it to prepare for the Trumpets production of the musical based on the novel in 2002. I played Edmund Pevensie in that play. It's an easy read for kids and tells a great story for everyone. I realized that it's actually an allegory of Jesus Christ's unconditional love for man. I also read "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. There are a lot of things that kids can pick up from books that they can't learn from television.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

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VISAYAS: BQ Mall -Bohol- Mar 26-Apr 2 • Peoples Park- Tacloban- April 13-20 • Ayala Center- Cebu- Apr 26-May 1 • Sm Iloilo- May 4-10 • Robinson Bacolod- May 14-19
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All things boil down to beach volley skills

TV HOST Tisha Silang teamed up with Rodriguez

BORACAY ISLAND—FOR TWO days, week before last, this famous resort island was a magnet for show biz personalities determined to forget work and pass the time showing off superior beach volley skills.

The Celebrity Volleyball Championship matches were among the highlights of the four-day "Nestea Beach 2007." Brad Turvey, Nancy Castiglione, Karel Marquez, Luis Manzano, Iya Villania, Nikki Gil and Reema Chanco were among the stars who turned out in the least cumbersome gear, the better to play muscle for muscle.

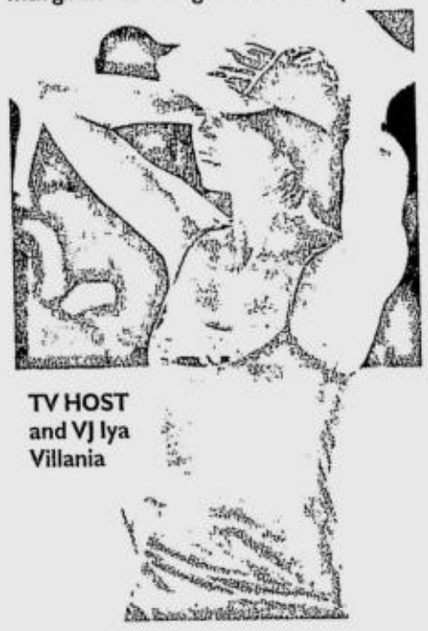
A series of parties that culminated on April 21 featured, among others, Parokya ni Edgar and Wake Up Your Seatmate, the all-girl quartet that sang "Get In It," the event's official theme.

Marinel R. Cruz

ACTRESS Nancy Castiglione also joined the beach clean-up campaign in the island

TV HOST Reema Chanco

BRAD Turvey co-hosted the victory party with girlfriend Castiglione and Marquez

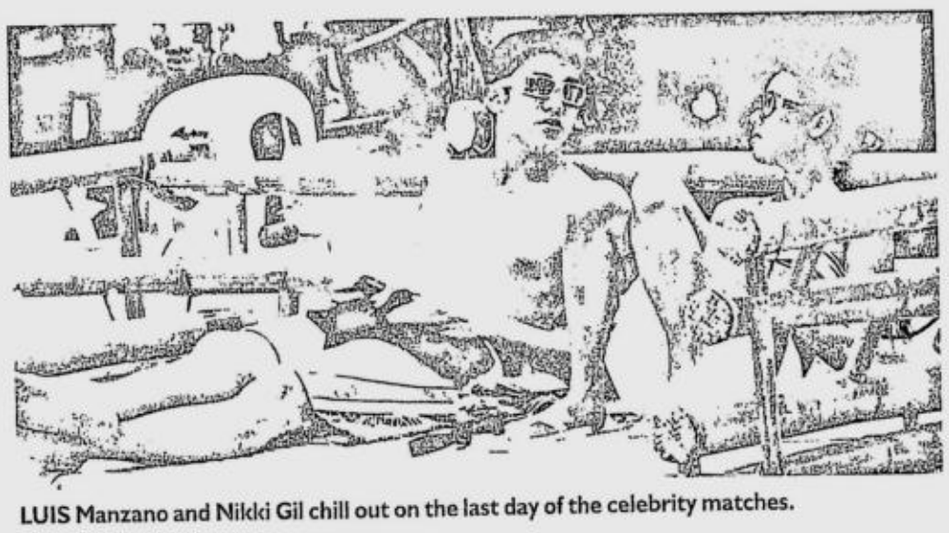


TV HOST and VJ Iya Villania

Model Jeff Rodriguez, with partner Silang, outplayed Villania and Oh

VIDEO jock Karel Marquez

TV HOST Sam Oh and columnist JR Isaac



LUIS Manzano and Nikki Gil chill out on the last day of the celebrity matches.

RAMP model Bubbles Paraiso

Bamboo sings hope to remote villages

"*BASTA'T tayo magkasama laging may umagang kay ganda* (The morning shines beautifully when we are together)."

"Umagang Kay Ganda," that '80s pop song, took on a different meaning when the rock band Bamboo sang it to Muslim and Tiduray residents of the remote Sitio Saramuray in Barangay Pilar, South Upi, Magindanao, during a visit last week.

The band has been bringing the message of hope and unity to distant villages in Mindanao as part of the Days of Peace campaign, which was designed to deliver basic services for children in situations of armed conflict.

Lead vocalist Bamboo Mañalac, guitarist Ira Cruz, bassist Nathan Azarcon and drummer Vic Mercado expressed their support in song while lending a hand in distributing vitamin A drops and de-worming tablets to children who were missed out during routine immunization services.

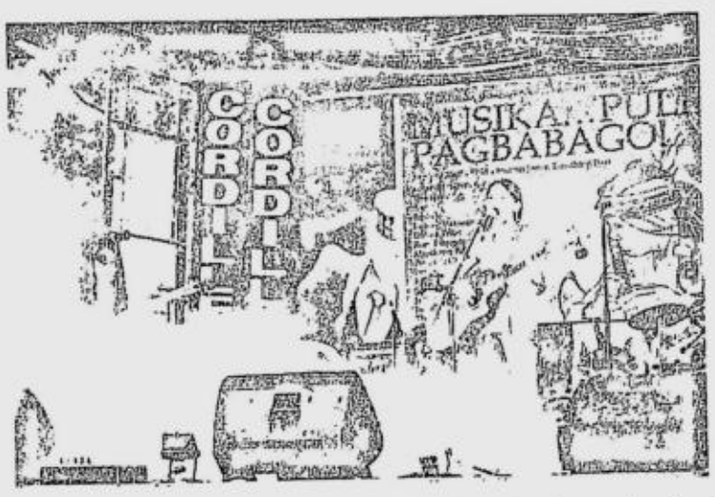
Sitio Saramuray, which sits over sprawling hills in the hinterlands of Maguindanao, is almost four hours away from Cotabato City—a remote community run by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"We want to express what we feel in the best way we can," said Bamboo. "We don't speak their dialect but we can use our songs to speak to them. *Kayang-kaya, sama-sama, bata muna*! (Together we can if we put children first)."

"We are now imagining how we can best help these families," said Vic.

"We know there's a lot to be done and what we've done here so far is just a small step," said Natan. "But we hope that it is a step toward that direction."

The band visited four communities in Mindanao in the provinces of Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan where the campaign knows no language or distance.



BAMBOO Mañalac (above, foreground) attends to a child in the Sara Muray sitio in Maguindanao while his band mates look on. At left, Butong Pakwan performs in a Baguio City concert.

Rock bands vs extrajudicial killings

BAGUIO CITY—Local rock bands and groups from Metro Manila performed in a concert here on April 23 to help drum up support for calls to stop extrajudicial killings in the country.

The Jerks' front man Chikoy Pura pierced the concert audience's hearts with his rendition of "Rage," his original composition.

The concert was staged as part of the Cordillera Day celebration, which commemorated the martyrdom of Kalinga chieftain Macliing Dulag and other Cordillera activists.

Dulag, who led the opposition to the Chico Dam project in the late 1970s, was killed by a government soldier on April 24, 1980.

Pura sang "Rage" while reciting the names of slain political activists in Northern Luzon:

SALIDUMMAY EV ESPIRITU

"Rage for Markus Bangit... rage for Alice Claver... rage for Jose Doton... rage for Romy Sanchez."

Beverly Longid, chair of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), said they staged the concert because they wanted to inform the public about the human rights situation in the country.

Representatives from Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, the United States and Europe attended the Cordillera Day celebration here.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, the event's keynote speaker, watched the concert and joined the elders in the *pattong*, a tribal dance accompanied with gongs and bamboo instruments.

The concert also featured the bands Binhi, Salidummay, Agi, Petune, The Wuds, Datu's Tribe, Butong Pakwan, People's Chorale and Musikang Bayan and musicians Jess Santiago and Joey "Pepe" Smith.

In a "heroes' tribute" on April 24, the Salidummay Group, Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Kordilyera (DKIK) and children of slain activists performed the song "Hustisya." The performance was accompanied by a torch and candle lighting ceremony. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

STARS FOR OTHERS

'Spider-Man 3' celebrity screening at The Podium

LOVI PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

JANNO Gibbs and Bing Loyzaga with their kids

YASMIEN KURDI

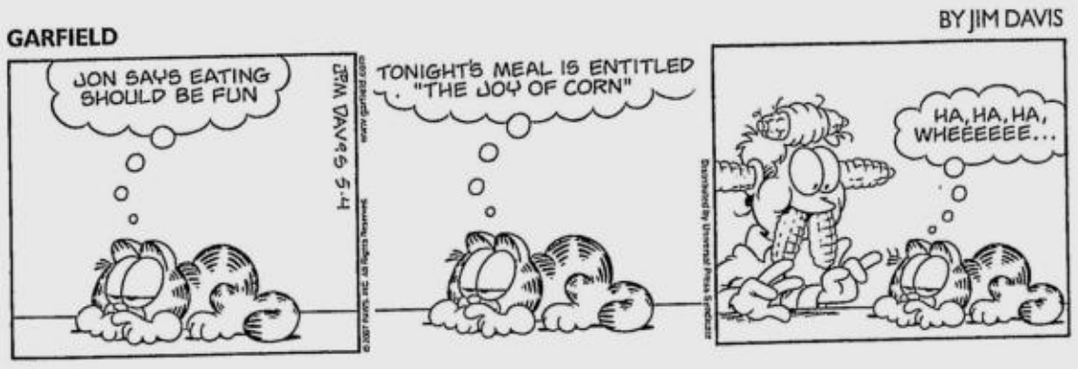
BUBBLES Paraiso and MTV DJ John Joe

RED CARPET

DIANA ZUBIRI

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

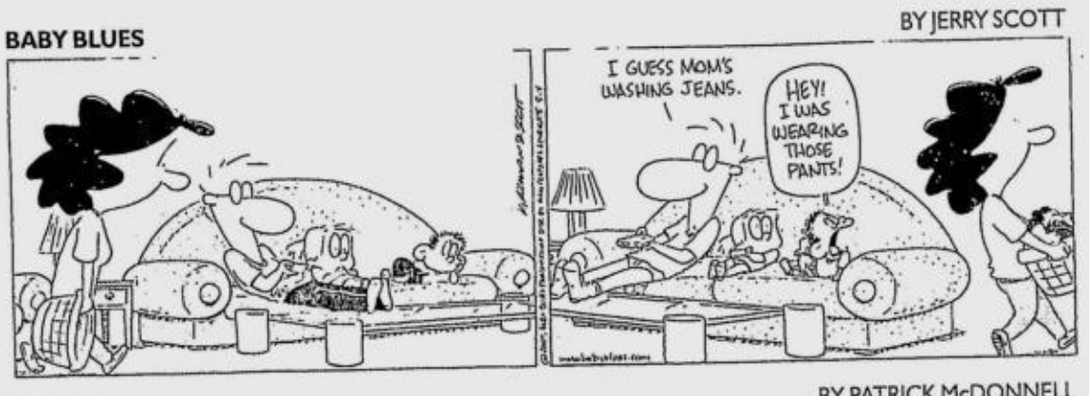


A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT



PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

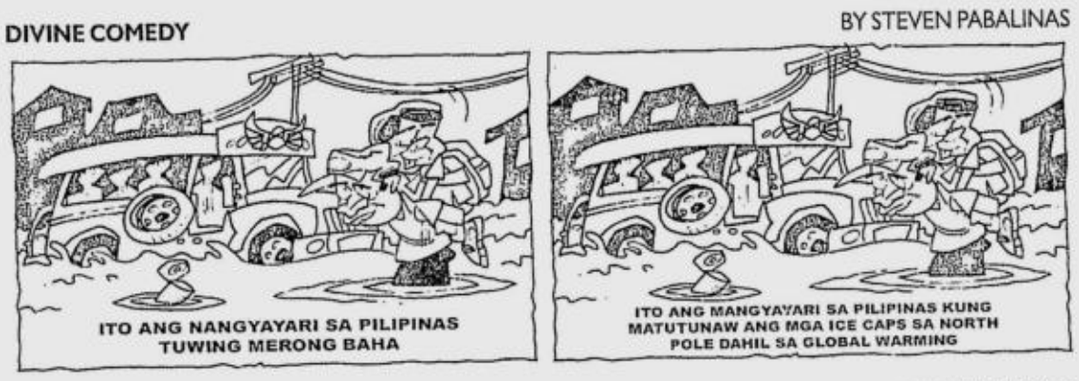
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



KIKO MACHINE

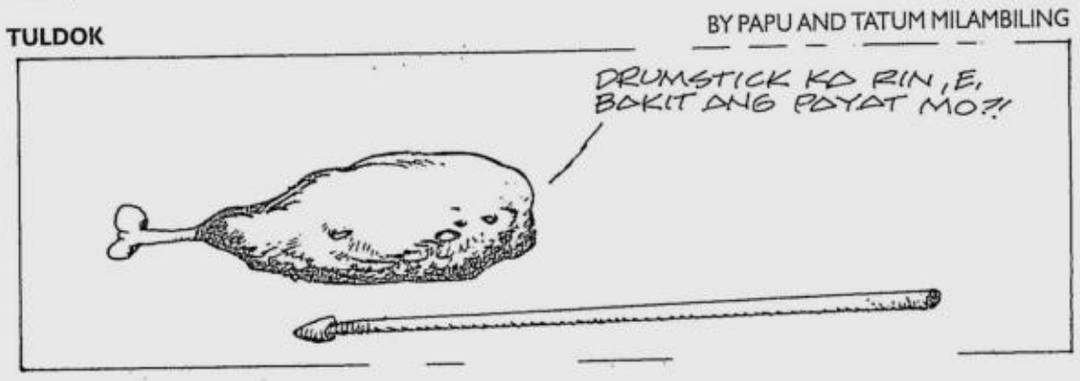
BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

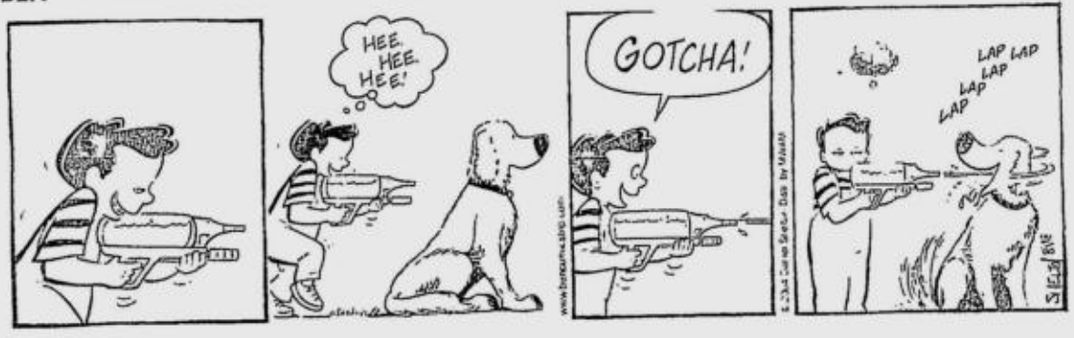
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

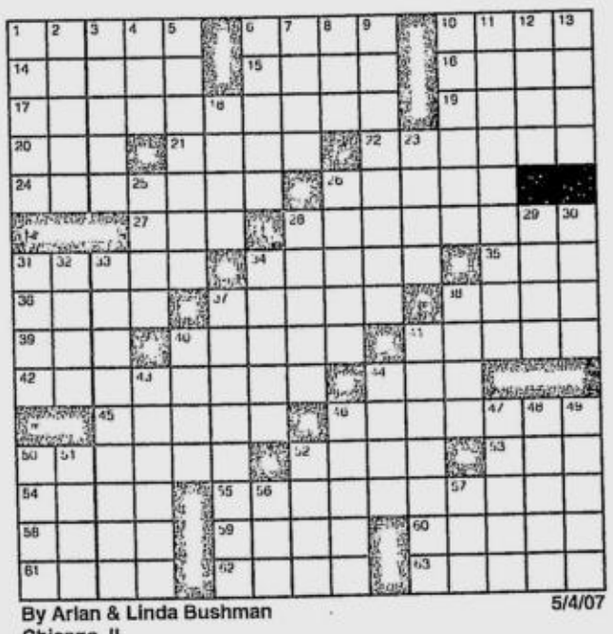


BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



DAILY CROSSWORD



By Arlan & Linda Bushman
Chicago, IL

5/4/07

ACROSS

1 Imperial
6 Rough file
10 Cairo's river
14 Skylit courts
15 Kirghiz mountains
16 Harrow rival
17 Forget it!
19 Punchhole remnant
20 Holm of filmdom
21 Aunt Bee's charge
22 Morning prayer
24 New York neighbor
26 "Over There" songwriter
27 Bigwig in D.C.
28 Composer's option
31 Up to now
34 One over par
35 FDR's Blue Eagle
36 Envelop
37 Forget it!
38 Pianist Thelonious
39 Perform on stage
40 Get-acquainted event
41 Boarding points
42 Bundled
44 By what means
45 Peak points
46 Bravery
50 Alpine retreat
52 Loudmouth
53 Fluffy scarf
54 Holy water holder
55 Forget it!
58 At some prior time
59 Author Rice
60 Duck or dodge
61 Visionary
62 Annoyingly slow
63 Satellite of Saturn

DOWN

1 Proportional relationship
2 Fictional Frome
3 Infantryman
4 Purpose
5 Hired hand
6 AM/FM device
7 Natural balm
8 Tuneful tool, at times
9 Cash for incidentals
10 Drink of the gods
11 Forget it!
12 Grubstake
13 Windups
18 English in pool
23 Hall in a harbor
25 Rush letters
26 Smokable Cuban
28 Did the lawn
29 Coastal bird
30 Shaggy oxen
31 Trade
32 Marine predator
33 Forget it!
34 Packing containers
37 Snort before bedtime
38 Bryn __
40 Wizard
41 Culinary connoisseur
43 Out of __
44 Shout derisively
46 __ Island, NY
47 More or less
48 Mild cheese
49 Swallowed
50 Some execs
51 Sharpen with a whetstone
52 Upper or lower berth
56 Lennon's lover
57 QB Manning

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

C	R	O	P		S	L	E	D		S	A	T	I	N
L	O	B	E		A	O	N	E		A	F	O	R	E
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D	E	E	P	S	E	A	D	I	V	E	R	S		
S	O	S		U	R	N		T	I	S		E	O	N
			E	N	S		M	A	A	M		C	P	A
K	O	H	L		A	R	E	S		A	I	R	E	S
A	R	E	A	L	W	A	Y	S	U	N	D	E	R	A
P	I	A	N	O		P	E	E	N		E	T	A	L
P	E	R		C	O	I	R		S	E	E			
A	L	T		A	N	D		A	T	M		D	I	M
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O	M	A	N	I		I	L	I	A		C	L	A	M
C	A	N	T	O		R	E	A	D		A	L	T	O
A	D	D	O	N		E	A	S	Y		R	Y	E	S

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HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're strong. You can be successful in whatever you choose to do. The core of your strength comes from your caring attitude. You're aware of the suffering in the world, and you respond intelligently to whatever needs to be done. This year you'll wrap up something you've been involved with for the past nine years. Time for something new!

Birthdate of: Audrey Hepburn, actress; Ana Gasteyer, actress/comedian; John Madden, hockey player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Try to do something different today. Change your routine. Explore other cultures. You want to learn something new. Sign up for a course or at least be a tourist in your own town.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Take care of issues related to shared property, debt, taxes and the responsibilities you have for others. It's boring, red-tape stuff—but it's gotta be done.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today's Moon is opposite your sign. This means you have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. Big deal. You can do it.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This can be a productive day at work. Ask for cooperation from co-workers and bosses. You might not get it, but at least you're going to look like you're on the job.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You want to have fun today! If you can, take a long lunch. Flirt with somebody. Enjoy playful activities with children. See a movie or catch a game. It's a fun day.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Home, family, domestic issues and possibly real estate are your focus today. Invite the gang over. Share food and drink with your loved ones.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is an excellent day to run errands, talk to siblings, buy and sell, go shopping or indulge in reading, writing and studying. You're keen to wrap up loose details.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Check your bank account. Find out how much money you don't have. Pay some bills. Take care of financial matters and issues that are job-related.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): The Moon is in your sign today! This can make you a bit more emotional than usual; however, it can also bring you a tiny bit of extra good luck.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You need some time to be by yourself today. Sneak off for a cup of coffee or whatever. Give yourself a little solitude to pull your act together.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You'll enjoy the company of others today. Enter into group activities with others, or call up a friend. This is a good day to formulate your long-term goals for the future.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Parents, bosses and authority figures in your life could figure prominently today. Listen to what they have to say.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

5	2							4
			4	9				1
		4				3		
							1	
	6		7	8	3		2	
	3							
		5				6		
7				3	9			
1							8	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★

5/04

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	2	6	8	4	5	1	3	9
5	4	9	1	3	2	7	8	6
8	1	3	6	9	7	4	2	5
3	9	7	2	6	4	5	1	8
6	8	2	5	1	3	9	7	4
4	5	1	9	7	8	2	6	3
1	7	4	3	5	6	8	9	2
2	3	5	7	8	9	6	4	1
9	6	8	4	2	1	3	5	7

Difficulty Level ★★★

The eyes of FrancisM

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

Photos by Francis Magalona

FOR TV HOST-MUSIC ARTIST and self-taught shutterbug Francis Magalona, it was love at first sight. Or, to be more specific, he fell in love with photography at first click.

He considers his friend, Maynard San Jose, a radiologist from Orange County, as his "mentor." San Jose, Magalona wrote in his blog (www.magalona.com), "started this fire in me."

HOBBIES

"Maynard taught me the basics, how to play with the aperture, opening, film and shutter speed," Magalona told INQUIRER Entertainment Living Stars.

While on a concert tour in Europe last year, he met Leo Riingen, CEO of Informatics and president of the Camera Club of the Philippines (CCP).

"He noticed that I was buying cameras and he invited me to join as probationary member of the CCP and I attended a meeting for the first time last December," he recalled.

In the next 12 to 15 months, he'll be a probationary member and will compete in the club's monthly tilts. He has joined the club's shoots in places near (Wawa Dam) and far (the Panagbenga Festival in Baguio).

For Magalona, photography is "a way of stopping time and capturing moments."

Photojournalism and low-light photography are his strongest suits, he said. Quite naturally, this industry insider also does well with show biz photos.

"I document events and have done several portraits of colleagues," he related.

In his blog, he recounted how thrilled he was to experience the "anonymity" afforded by being behind the camera. At the same time, he admitted that his celebrity had allowed him to take photos of famous folks like Ara Mina and Ralph Recto at the Baguio event. "They recognized this probationary shooter," he wrote.

He's got the best of both worlds.

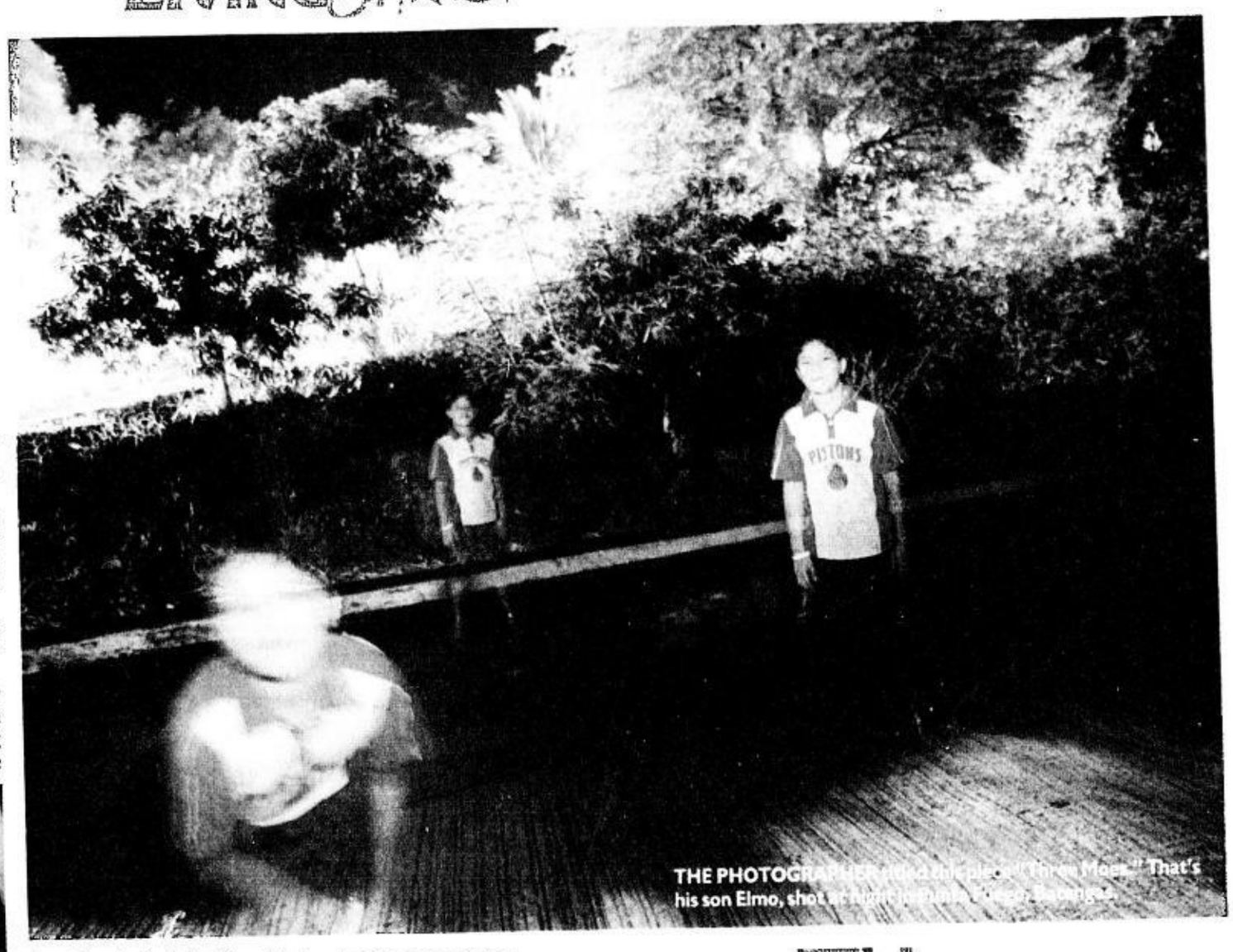
During the "Philippine Idol" grand finals at Araneta Coliseum, Magalona, who is a contest judge, snapped candid photos of the finalists in a huddle, praying backstage.

"It showed how close they were," he said.

Needless to say, he is also the official photographer of the Magalona clan and his favorite subjects are his children—all eight of them.

When sons Elmo Moses, 12, and Arkin Luciano, 7, received certificates of academic distinction from school, proud dad was on hand clicking away.

In his blog, he volunteered that Elmo and Arkin are his photography assistants. "They apprentice for me. They know the concepts of shutter, aperture and low-light photography."



THE PHOTOGRAPHER and disciple "Tonton Moses." That's his son Elmo, shot at [illegible]

WHO'S that girl? That's Bituin Escalante in Vienna during a concert tour.

"THE MASK" gave the photographer a score of 3.95 (with 5 as the highest) in the club's March contest in Baguio.

A POPULAR shopping place in Austria, "it's near St. Stephen's Church," the shutterbug says.

TITLED "St. Elmo's Fire," this close-up of the eye of his son Elmo while looking at a candle was praised by his photography idol Bien Bautista. "Gave me goosebumps."

MAGALONA'S eight kids and wife Pia gathered in their condo unit to welcome him back after a Borneo trip.

BACKSTAGE at the "Idol" finals: Gian Magdangal, center, is the group's "spiritual leader," says Magalona. Here, he leads the finalists in prayer.

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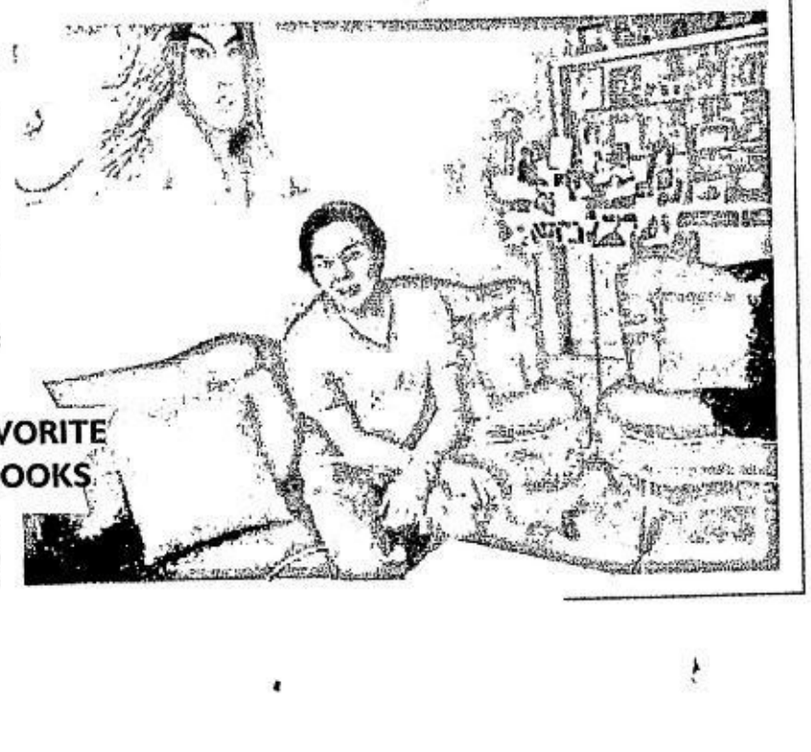
JOHN LAPUS

The living room is my favorite spot in the house because it's where my television is. Whenever I arrive from work at night I automatically open the TV and watch my favorite shows for about two hours. I go up to my bedroom only when I'm really sleepy. And when I wake up, before I take a shower, I go straight to my living room for more TV-watching.

Marinel R. Cruz



FAVORITE NOOKS

SPORTS / A27

Warriors oust top-seed Mavericks

NEWS / A19

Comelec complete list of party-list nominees

NEWS / A2

Makati Mayor Binay defies suspension order

NEWS / A3

Serge O OK but sidelined from GO campaign

ACROSS / A15

Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo faces disqualification by Comelec over 9-year citizenship issue

What Pope, Bin Laden, 'Borat' have in common

NEW YORK—WHAT DO Osama bin Laden, Pope Benedict XVI and Borat creator Sacha Baron Cohen have in common?

They are among a packed and varied field chosen by Time Magazine for this year's list of the

WHAT/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, May 5, 2007 ★★★ 12 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 146 ₱18 website: www.inquirer.net

Gringo bares meeting with GMA in Palace

By Fe Zamora and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

INDEPENDENT SENATORIAL CANDIDATE GREgorio "Gringo" Honasan said he had a 15-minute meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang Thursday night where he sought to "clear the air" about his cases at the justice department.

The President responded by saying: "If you

GRINGO/ A10

Deadliest day: 11 killed

Pro-GMA bets among 499 in 91 party-lists

By Nikko Dizon

THE AKBAYAN PARTY-LIST GROUP YESTERday said that just as it feared, people and groups allegedly closely associated with the administration appeared in the list of party-list nominees finally released by the Commission on Elections.

Following a Supreme Court order handed down the other day, the Comelec law department yesterday released the names of the party-list nominees to Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales and Walden Bello, the Akbayan's second nominee. *(Complete list on Page A19.)*

It showed that the Comelec has accredited 91 party-list organizations which submitted a total of 499 party-list nominees.

"Our fears have come true that many of these people are closely associated with the Arroyo administration through the Office of External Affairs," Bello told reporters after going through the list.

The Supreme Court was acting on a petition filed by Rosales, among others, asking the high court to compel the poll body to immediately dis-

PRO-GMA/ A19

TU laughs off Cory tap; Ping points to Isafp

THE REPORTED WIRETAP ON THE PHONE of former President Corazon Aquino may be a publicity stunt to promote the senatorial candidacy of her son, candidates of Team Unity said yesterday.

"I don't believe that. You must ask Noynoy (Benigno Aquino III of the Genuine Opposition). He might be bugging Cory," Prospero Pichay told reporters in Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte, where he and other TU candidates are conducting a final swing through Mindanao.

According to Vicente Sotto III, studies have shown that candidates resort to strategy and publicity gimmicks when elections near.

"I'm just wondering, who would bug President Cory? She's too well-loved to be bugged," Sotto said, adding that he himself would not mind if his phone conversations were tapped.

"Kung wala ka namang itinatago, bakit ka matatakot (If you're not hiding anything, why should you be afraid)?" he said.

TU LAUGHS OFF/ A6

Burgos case: EU shocked, cites RP's culture of impunity

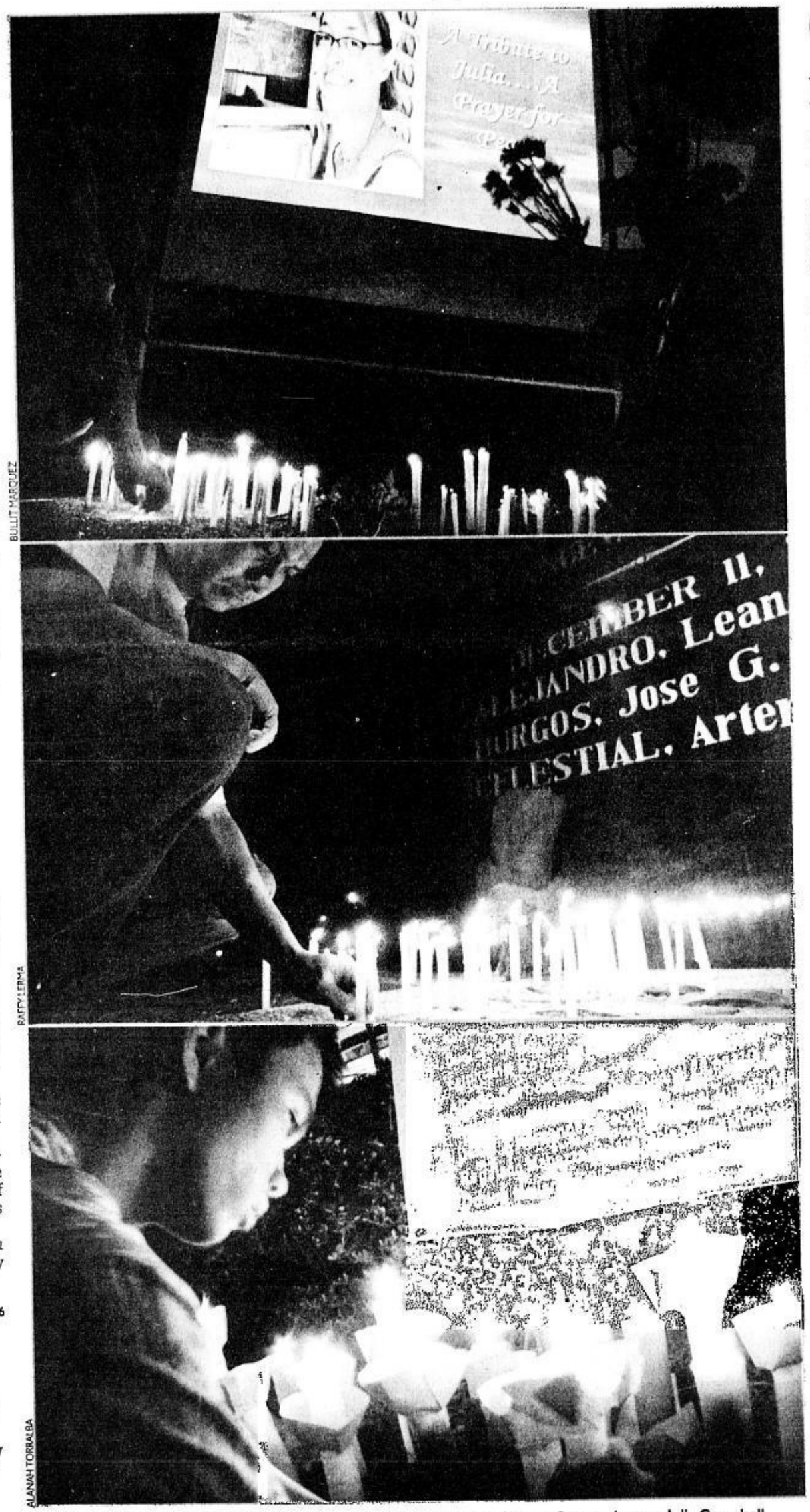
By Volt Contreras, Juliet Labog-Javellana and TJ Burgonio

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S CHIEF ENvoy to the Philippines yesterday expressed "shock" over the disappearance of an activist son of the late press freedom icon Joe Burgos, saying that human rights abuse had apparently become a daily occurrence in the country.

"Hardly a day goes by without a fresh reminder of the essential importance of human rights. Just this week, we've seen the appalling case of the abduction of Jonas Burgos and two companions here in Quezon City," Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, head of the EC delegation in Manila, said in a program at the Commission on Human Rights' central office.

"I'm pleased to see that the CHR is looking into this, but frankly I am shocked about what

BURGOS CASE/ A8



BULLIT MARQUEZ / RAFFY LERMA / ALANAH TORRALBA

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE BY CANDLE LIGHT: (Top) Murdered Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell worked and lived among Bicolanos, and they pay tribute to their fondly missed mentor at Penaranda Park in Legazpi City Thursday. (Middle) Family and friends hold a vigil for the missing activist Jonas Burgos at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City. (Above) Observance of World Press Freedom Day Thursday in Timog, Quezon City, includes holding up the light to the names of journalists who fell in the night of martial rule.

6 die in Abra; mayor seized in Mindoro

By Vincent Cabreza and Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon
and Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

IN THE DEADLIEST 24 HOURS of the campaign period, 11 people were gunned down in various parts of Luzon and a town mayor was abducted, as officials pleaded to candidates to rein in their armed followers with 10 days to go before the May 14 polls.

In the worst single incident, six supporters and relatives of Mayor Cecilia Luna of Lagayan, Abra, were killed yesterday when gunmen opened fire on her vehicle while the mayor's party was returning from a wake.

In Oriental Mindoro, suspected communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels abducted reelectionist Mayor Alex Aranas and killed two of his bodyguards during a fierce gunbattle lasting almost two hours in Pola town.

A former police officer running for councilor was shot to death Thursday afternoon in Albay province.

"*Grabe* (This is terrible). *Tsk tsk* ... I am calling on all candidates to be calm," a dismayed Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. told the INQUIRER on hearing of the latest upsurge of violence as the election campaign lurched into the homestretch.

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon sounded equally alarmed.

"I call on the candidates to control their followers to prevent violent incidents. The candi-

DEADLIEST/ A10

Ambush, cries Bro. Eddie son; not so, says Army

By Carmela Reyes and Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

BOCAUE, BULACAN—A QUARREL OVER campaign posters triggered a gunbattle before dawn yesterday between bodyguards of former Mayor Eduardo Villanueva Jr. and Army troopers. One soldier died in the shootout.

The camp of Villanueva—a son of Jesus is Lord movement leader Bro. Eddie Villanueva—accused the soldiers of removing his campaign posters outside the headquarters of his party Bangon Pilipinas in Barangay Bunlo, and of provoking the fight by firing on their headquarters.

The Army gave a different version of the incident and said the firing did not start with them.

A total of 13 men—11 from the Army and two from the police—were taken in for questioning and for gunpowder tests.

One unconfirmed report said the soldiers were carrying posters of the party-list group

AMBUSH/ A10

Hacienda Velez-Malaga: 'Litmus test of political will'

By Fernando del Mundo

AGRARIAN REFORM-TEAM *Report*
By Fernando del Mundo
Chief

(Second of three parts)

IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE when 122 workers learned in 1996 that a quarter of the 455-hectare sugar hacienda they had been farming would be divided among them under the government's agrarian reform program.

That vision soon faded and turned into a nightmare as the owner of Hacienda Velez-Malaga, Roberto Cuenca, 66, opposed the directive of the Department of Agrarian Reform, using judicial processes to at least retain effective control of his plantation, if not outright ownership.

Workers who signed up for land reform were fired.

Tension heightened after the Supreme Court ruled late last year that DAR has the exclusive jurisdiction over agrarian reform cases, scratching a lower court ruling that the department has no authority to subdivide Velez-Malaga.

The die was cast. Goons went to work.

DAR officials who later went to the hacienda to settle the issue had to back off three times, fearing violence.

In January, armed men shot and killed Pepito Santillan, 60, who dared to own a piece of Velez-Malaga and had refused to go along with 198 other farmers

HACIENDA/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2007

EZ2 FOUR DIGIT
8 26 | 0 1 7 9
Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
8 1 1 | 6 3 0
(All in exact order)
MEGALOTTO 6/45
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/04/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Binay defies suspension order

By Julie Aurelio and Tarra Quismundo

ARMED WITH A SUSPENSION ORDER FROM THE Ombudsman, officials of the Interior department last night moved to evict Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay from the City Hall, a little over a week before elections.

About 2,000 supporters of Binay, who is heavily tipped to retain his mayoral post in the May 14 polls, quickly gathered outside the new Makati City Hall shortly before 10 p.m. in an outpouring of support for the opposition leader.

It was not immediately clear why the order was being served late at night before the weekend, where the courts—where Binay could challenge the order—are closed.

Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, accompanied by senior police officers, met with Binay and Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado in Binay's office on the 21st floor of the City Hall to serve the order.

But the actual serving of the order was deferred to Monday.

During their meeting, Binay questioned the timing of the order, saying a preventive suspension order could not be served after office hours.

Corpus said he had wanted to serve the order earlier because a hearing of the case had been scheduled for Tuesday and he thought that serving it on Monday would be a bit late.

Binay told Corpus that he would be at the City Hall on Monday at 8 a.m. during the flag raising ceremony to receive the suspension order.

Corpus agreed to defer the serving of the order until then.

Binay said the status quo would be maintained for now. He added, however, that once the suspension order is served on him on Monday, Mercado would assume the mayoral post while he would file a petition with the Court of Appeals for a temporary restraining order.

"The suspension order is null and void," he said.

This was the second time in six months that the Arroyo administration, on whose side Binay had been a political thorn, had tried to oust the leader of the United Opposition (UNO).

Some supporters waved clenched fists, others chanted: "We don't want an actor," an apparent reference to movie actor, Sen. Lito Lapid, whom Malacañang is backing in the mayoral contest.

Earlier, special police units tried to seal off secondary roads to prevent the entry of Binay supporters.

"This is harassment," the mayor's daughter Abigail said in a radio interview. "They are moving [against him] in succession. There was the petition for disqualification ... Then there was the garnishment of the assets of the city. Then the personal assets of Binay were frozen."

"Now here comes the suspension order. His political rivals are getting desperate. By hook or by crook, they want to win. As a result, the people of Makati are getting more united against them," said Abigail, who herself is running for a seat in Congress.

A senior official at the Department of Interior and Local Governments told the INQUIRER that the DILG was merely implementing an order from the Ombudsman for the suspension of Binay.

"This is not an arrest but an implementation of the suspension order," said the official, who asked not to be identified because he said he was not authorized to speak to the media.

At one point, policemen looking for Binay, forced their way into the City Hall, damaging some property.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno informed the Palace yesterday that he had received a copy of the Ombudsman's suspension order.

"They have been looking for Mayor Binay but could not locate him. They just found him an hour ago," Ermita said at about 9 p.m.

Ermita disclaimed Palace involvement in the move to oust Binay.

"We cannot meddle with the Ombudsman," he said. "They (Binay's group) have a recourse [in the courts]. Either Monday or Tuesday, they can get a TRO (temporary restraining order," Ermita said.

"The DILG is just executing a lawful order from the Ombudsman," said Ermita.

Sources in the Ombudsman, reached last night, said the order stemmed from a complaint by former councilor Oscar Ibay that City Hall under Binay employed ghost employees possibly numbering allegedly by the thousands.

Also contacted last night, Ibay said that of the five complaints he had initiated against Binay, one complaint did involve ghost employees.

He claimed that his office discovered up to 8,000 City Hall employees without tax identification numbers (TIN) and "this is where they probably hid the ghost employees."

In October last year, Binay barricaded himself in his 22-floor office at the City Hall after the DILG also tried to suspend him over the issue of ghost employees.

The latest suspension order was reportedly signed by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez and endorsed by Deputy Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro.

At one point last night, Binay's opposition colleagues began streaming into City Hall to provide moral support for the embattled mayor.

They included opposition senatorial candidates Sonia Roco, Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III and Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr.

Pimentel said that as a general rule there should be no preventive suspension of candidates during an election period.

Roco, for her part, said: "It's very, very unjust and sets a state of terrorism. It sends a chilling effect on democracy."

She said the suspension order was an attack not just on the Mayor but on the opposition.

A handful of members of the militant group Bayan Muna and Akbayan also came and waved flags on the steps of the City Hall in a show of support for Binay. *With reports from Volt Contreras and Juliet Labog*

"THE ORDER IS NULL AND VOID." Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay defies his suspension order from the Department of the Interior and Local Governments surrounded by supporters at the Makati City Hall. RAFFY LERMA

Depressed Mike A wants to work

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S HUSband Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo is fighting off depression after being forced to drastically change his daily routine following his critical open heart surgery last month.

Dr. Juliet Gopez-Cervantes said Arroyo had been asking to be allowed to go back to work in his Makati office.

"Up to the last minute yesterday (Tuesday) he is asking us to allow him to go back to his office in Makati, because he wants to start his work already. He has been used to that kind of lifestyle ... then suddenly we're cutting him off from that kind of lifestyle so it takes a lot of adjustments for him," Cervantes said.

Cervantes said Arroyo wanted to return to work to fight off depression.

"If you noticed yesterday he was not as bubbly as before and in terms of stamina you can say he is weak-looking. One of the reasons is that his appetite is not good yet," Cervantes told the INQUIRER on Tuesday, the day after Arroyo was discharged from St. Luke's Medical Center.

Cervantes, who led the 18-member medical team, said Arroyo was depressed because he could not yet get back to his normal activities prior to his surgery.

"Of course even for a normal individual who is restricted from going back to his normal life, there is some sort of depression since he could not get back to (his usual activities)," Cervantes said.

Doctors have ordered Arroyo to avoid all stressful activities during the critical three-month recovery period.

"Actually the most crucial is three months, but we will not restrict him from going to his office for three months. Probably after next week we will give him the go-signal," she said.

On their advice, Arroyo on Thursday instructed his lawyers to withdraw all libel cases he filed against members of the media in a "gesture of peace" and as gratitude to God for giving him a second lease on life.

Cervantes said Arroyo had complied with their restrictions against eating ice cream, cakes and all fatty and cholesterol-laden food he had indulged in before he fell ill and had to undergo a heart operation.

"Not only that he could not eat anything that he wants but he cannot do the usual things that he does so even the appetite is being affected," the doctor explained.

After his discharge from St. Luke's on May 1, Arroyo had been required to return to the hospital every other day for his cardiac rehabilitation program, during which he is asked to do treadmill and other cardiac exercises to improve his mobility.

As this developed, Cervantes and SLMC president Jose FG Ledesma confirmed that the First Family paid the hospital bills.

"It's our privilege to serve them and we offered the hospital services free of charge but the First Family insisted on paying for everything," Ledesma told the INQUIRER.

Cervantes also confirmed that all the 18 doctors who attended to Arroyo offered their services for free.

Ledesma declined to say how much Arroyo's operation and 23-day hospitalization cost.

But hospital sources said the bills, excluding the doctors' professional fees, could reach as much as P4 million.

SWS head laughs off critics

By TJ Burgonio

MAHAR MANGAHAS, PRESIDENT OF the Social Weather Station, merely laughed off a complaint that ruling party officials filed with a leading global survey organization over the SWS's alleged partisanship and bias for the opposition.

"We're not disturbed by it. We're sure we're doing everything ethically," said Mangahas in a phone interview.

He said the SWS has been conducting surveys for both Genuine Opposition (GO) and the administration's Team Unity (TU), and could not be accused of being pro-opposition.

"We conduct surveys for administration candidates for that matter. We can't reveal who they are. We're not conducting these purely for the opposition," he said.

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, the TU media director, said he had sent a letter-complaint to the World Association for Public Opinion Research (Wapor), accusing the SWS of "engaging in unscrupulous trending practices and blatant partnership" in its surveys.

'Slanted' questions

He cited a survey in which SWS allegedly used "slanted and accusatory questions" such as whether the respondents agreed or disagreed that "PGMA steals from the coffers of the country" and that "PGMA will cheat in the coming elections in order for her candidates to win."

MANGAHAS

This particular survey was commissioned by Sen. Segio Osmeña III, the GO campaign manager.

Mangahas explained that in the survey cited, there were 10 agree-disagree items that were used to test public opinion about the administration's weaknesses.

The survey respondents were free to either affirm or deny any agree-disagree item, whether pertaining to an alleged strength or an alleged weakness, he said.

He said the results, which have been posted on its website at sws.org.ph since April 30, clearly showed where the weaknesses were affirmed and the strengths denied.

As for allegations that SWS was engaging in "unscrupulous trending practices," Mangahas said "we do not do that. That's not within our policy."

No integrity lost

In an interview with ANC television, Mangahas said he doubted the complaint would affect the SWS's integrity.

"I don't think we've lost it. We're being attacked because we have the integrity," he said.

Also yesterday, the SWS denied releasing results of a local pre-election survey it supposedly conducted in Pasay City.

It warned the public to disregard any survey report that was not confirmed as an SWS release on its website.

"Anyone checking the website will observe that, to this date, SWS has not made any report concerning prospects for the 2007 elections at the local level, including Pasay City," SWS said.

The denial came in the wake of news reports on Monday about an SWS survey purportedly showing that former mayor Wenceslao Trinidad had taken the lead over his rival, Rep. Consuelo Dy.

A copy of the survey shown to the INQUIRER bore the SWS logo and footnote.

But it did not carry such vital information as the period when the survey was conducted, the sponsor of the survey and the SWS's contact number.

With a report from Julie M. Aurelio

Unopposed bets to deliver–TU

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Cynthia D. Balana

TEAM UNITY YESTERDAY SAID THAT the 267 administration-backed town and city mayors running unopposed or against token opponents would deliver the votes for the administration slate.

The League of Municipalities of the Philippines led by Binalonan, Pangasinan Mayor Ramon Guico Jr. has adopted a resolution, pledging their commitment to back up the 12-member TU slate.

"The absence of serious challengers to our reelection bids will afford us full time to campaign for the landslide win of Team Unity in our respective constituents," said Guico.

The mayors said their support for TU was in acknowledgment of President Macapagal-Arroyo's move to increase and speed up the release of the internal revenue allotments of local government units.

Tourism Secretary and TU spokesperson Joseph Ace Durano said the 243 municipal mayors and 24 city mayors have committed to actively campaign for a 12-0 vote in their respective areas for TU.

Durano said there was an estimated five million voters in towns and cities where mayors are unopposed.

The support from these mayors is the engine driving the political machinery that Durano believes will offset the popularity of Genuine Opposition bets in the elections.

The city mayors, on the other hand, are led by Jerry Treñas of Iloilo City who heads the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP).

Powerful political clans and politicians in Mindanao yesterday also declared that a 12-0 victory for Team Unity senatorial candidates could be achieved in the region without resorting to cheating because almost all incumbent pro-administration local candidates are running unopposed.

During a campaign sortie by the TU in Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte , Rep. Abdullah Bobby Dimaporo of the 2nd district of Lanao del Norte told reporters that the opposition should stop accusing local officials in Mindanao of planning to cheat in favor of TU candidates because they do not have to.

Ailing Serge O sidelined as GO campaign manager

By Dona Pazzibugan

SEN. SERGIO OSMEÑA III, CAMpaign manager of the Genuine Opposition senatorial slate, is recovering well from a minor heart surgery and raring to get back into the campaign but has been asked by GO leaders to take it easy.

"In fact, he can walk already. He wanted to hold a meeting with top leaders of the coalition, but we advised him to take a rest," said GO spokesperson Adel Tamano.

Renato "RC" Constantino Jr. will temporarily serve as acting GO campaign manager, according to Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, GO convenor and president of the United Opposition party.

Osmeña, 63, underwent a coronary angioplasty at the Makati Medical Center on Thursday night to remove a small clot that was found in an artery in the lower part of his heart.

The procedure, which involves the mechanical widening of a narrowed or obstructed blood vessel, was performed shortly after he was rushed to the hospital on Thursday afternoon after complaining of chest pains.

Binay said Osmeña's being sidelined would not derail the GO campaign.

He said Constantino has been working closely with Osmeña from the start of the campaign.

"His absence will not affect the operations of the opposition since everything, particularly the mechanisms on vote protection, has been pretty much laid out," Constantino told reporters.

"I will just continue his job and see to it that the plans will go on smoothly," he added.

San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, the campaign manager that Osmeña replaced, has been asked to take a more active role in the campaign.

GO officials said stress may have taken a toll on the health of Osmeña.

"He is a workaholic. Even while having a mild heart attack he was still giving instructions about work," said Tamano.

"We have been really working so hard at the headquarters. He usually goes home around 11 p.m. ever since assuming the campaign strategist post. Sometimes he would leave the office at 3 a.m.," he added.

He said Osmeña had been "setting up mechanisms and systems to protect the votes" of the 11 GO senatorial candidates.

Suspected bomber tells of torture at Camp Crame

By Alcuin Papa

IT WAS A TALE OF TORTURE AND NIGHTS of disquiet.

For at least the whole month of January, Ricardo Ayeras said he was tortured by members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Intelligence Group inside their headquarters in Camp Crame.

"I almost lost my mind," Ayeras told the INQUIRER during an interview somewhere in Manila.

Ayeras was arrested last Jan. 3 in Tagkawayan, Quezon for his alleged involvement in the 2005 Valentine's Day bombing. Police said Ayeras was personally picked by Hilarion Santos, founder of the Rajah Solaiman Movement, as one of the group's core members.

But Ayeras denied the charge, claiming he never met Santos.

Throughout his detention in Camp Crame, he was deprived of the services of a lawyer.

For five days, Ayeras said he was beaten, kicked and electrocuted by his interrogators to force him to admit his involvement in the bombing. He was not allowed to sleep and was given a steady diet of water and coffee to keep him awake.

"I felt my mind in limbo. My jaw was locking and I couldn't eat. I think they put something in my food that made me want to throw up," Ayeras said.

He also experienced difficulty urinating and felt pains in his chest area.

On Jan. 8, he was presented to media in Camp Crame wearing an ill-fitting white Muslim cap. But he denied being a Muslim. "I had no sleep that time and I was too weak to protest."

After his presentation to media, the beatings and interrogations continued. "They wanted me to admit involvement in the bombing. But I told them I knew nothing about that," he said.

He claimed that his interrogators whom he identified as PNP IG director Chief Supt. Romeo Ricardo, a certain "Tony Bakla," and a certain Rudy Pangan, also threatened to kill him if he continued to refuse to admit his supposed involvement in the bombing.

In early February, Ayeras was transferred to the Makati City Jail where he recuperated from his injuries. He was ordered released last Feb. 16 by Makati Judge Joselito Villarosa.

Ricardo however denied that his men tortured Ayeras. "Of course that is not true. That's just stories he made up." He also wondered why Ayeras took all this time to come out with his story and why he has not filed any case against the police.

Ricardo added that torture is no longer being practiced by the police. "Police now are more afraid of being charged for torture. They will have to get their own lawyers and bear the expenses for their legal defense. *Malabo yan* (That's weak). It's all an afterthought."

Comelec clarifies ban on cell phones

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES IS BANNED INside polling places, but only when they are used to take photos of your completed ballot, the Commission on Elections has clarified yesterday.

"What we are preventing is using the cell phone as a proof that you voted for someone," Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez said.

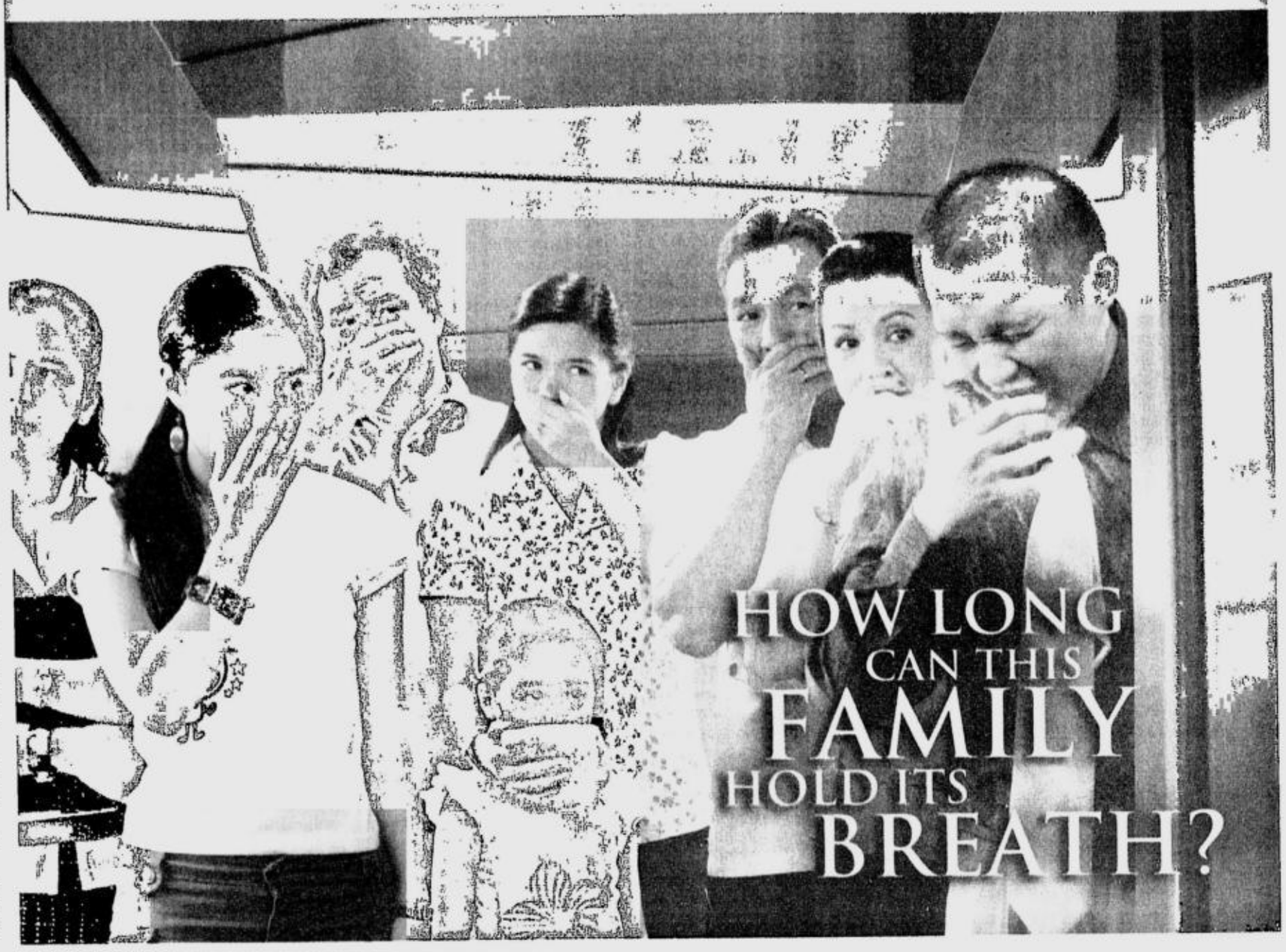
"If the use is not for that purpose, there is no reason (for bringing in cell phones) to be prevented," Jimenez also said.

He made the clarification following statements from various groups slamming the news about the Comelec banning the use of phones inside polling places.

In a statement, activist group TXTPower said that its members would be bringing their cell phones in polling places on election day.

The group said it would use cell phones to document acts of fraud and cheating on election day.

The groups are barking up the wrong tree, however. Jimenez said there was no effort to ban the bringing of mobile phones inside polling places.



INFLUENZA. A SINGLE SNEEZE TRAVELING AT A SPEED OF 600 MILES PER HOUR MAY CARRY ABOUT 100,000 INFLUENZA VIRUS CELLS. THESE STUBBORN CELLS CAN STAY ALIVE IN A ROOM FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES. EVENTUALLY, THEY COULD ENTER YOUR BODY THROUGH YOUR MOUTH, EYES OR NOSE.

Now, think about it, whom do you share a room with?
Or to put it another way, with whom do you share the air you breathe?

Influenza can infect anyone just by breathing the same air an infected person breathes.
Moving too fast, every member of your family might be infected before you know it.

This highly contagious disease called Influenza is commonly misconceived as "just a Flu" or the common cold.
The truth is, it could lead to serious complications like Bronchitis, Pneumonia, heart failure, and ultimately, death.

Fortunately there is a vaccine that can protect you and your family from this threat.
Get yourself and your family vaccinated against the Influenza virus.

References:
1. JFK Health World Museum
2. http://www.birdavianflu.com/birdfluairbornetransmission.htm
3. http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm

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'Owning land is ultimate dream'

By TJ Burgonio

FOR FLORENDA HILARIO LIFE HAS never been as sweet as she would have wanted it.

She was born 48 years ago at Hacienda Velez-Malaga when sugar was the Philippines' premier dollar earner, enjoying preferential quota in the US market and providing Filipino producers a tremendous source of wealth and power.

At the age of 17, Hilario joined the cadre of farmers in the hacienda, planting sugarcane and meshing fertilizer in the field.

It was two years before the end in 1974 of the country's preferential quota in the United States that the former US colony had been enjoying since the 1930s.

It was a time of great uncertainty. From peak exports to the United States of over a million tons annually, shipments fell to roughly 150,000 metric tons.

The Philippines was forced to sell on the world market. But by the mid-1970s, a world awash in sugar sent prices crashing to record lows—lower than even the cost of production in the Philippines.

Sugar farms in the country had been run inefficiently, relying on cheap labor. When planters decided to mechanize operations in the past two decades, hordes of plantation workers were thrown out of jobs or had to fight for them.

Hilario says she was paid P130 a day—far below the minimum daily wage elsewhere in the country. And that was only if she used up her daily ration of five sacks of fertilizer in the field.

"You're only paid in full if you've used up all the fertilizer. Since you couldn't do that in one day, you'd get paid less than P130 a day. At the end of the day, you had to borrow money so we'd have food on the table," she says.

Hilario, who was widowed in 1993, couldn't send her children to school with her meager income. Her eldest daughter, who used to help her out at the farm, got married at 17. Hilario could not send her to high school. She's now helping put her younger sister, 16, through high school.

Glimmer of hope

A glimmer of hope came in 1996 when Hacienda Velez-Malaga was placed under the 1988 agrarian reform law, decreeing its redistribution to tillers. But the owner, Roberto Cuenca, and farmers loyal to him, fought the move.

Cuenca says the 122 farmers who opted for land reform were not genuine hacienda farm hands.

In February, Hilario joined a hunger strike by several dozen Velez-Malaga workers, camping in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform on Elliptical Road in Quezon City to press demands for their claim on the Cuenca hacienda.

It was a move of desperation after the Supreme Court had cleared legal impediments and DAR failed three times to install them following outbreaks of violence.

"We value our life because each of us has a family back home," says Hilario, looking pale and gaunt. "If it takes one more life to be sacrificed to get us all installed, we're prepared to do it," she says.

The protest fast was lifted a month later after an initial group of beneficiaries was settled in the Hacienda while the legitimacy of the other beneficiaries was being sorted out.

The ultimate dream

For the beneficiaries, owning the land, planting it with any crop of their choice, and tilling it any time of the day, without the landowner's men watching them, is their ultimate dream.

"No one will control us. No one will tell us when to work or not. If you have land, you will work at any time of the day. There's no boss around," says Hilario.

"And of course, we will have time to rest," says Adelaida Santillan, 57, who sells vegetables she grows from their backyard patch and cogon grass she gathers from the field to make both ends meet.

Santillan's husband Severino is included in the list of beneficiaries under a collective certificate of land ownership.

He was one of those fired in 1996 after he opted for land reform. His brother, Pepito, 60, was killed on Jan. 24 when armed men attacked the homes of the pro-agrarian reform workers at Velez-Malaga.

A vindication

"If we don't have a land of our own, life's really hard. Our daughter has stopped going to school because we had no money for it," says Santillan, one of the hunger strikers at DAR. "If we have a land, we can plant rice, corn or fruits. At least, it's our own. This isn't just for us; it's for our children."

For another protester, Pepito Santillan Jr., 28, getting installed would mean vindication not only for the beneficiaries, but for his slain father, and his mother Elsie, who died from cardiac arrest on March 7.

"If we're given the land, in a way, my father will get justice," he said.

Since the March 22 partial installation, the beneficiaries—including those who used to sleep in foxholes behind sugarcane thickets to avoid strafing by a rival group of farmers—have been spending quiet nights in their shacks, thanks to soldiers and policemen deployed to protect them.

Dogs no longer bark in the night

"The night we returned from Manila by ship, it was surprisingly quiet. We didn't hear any dog bark, which to us was always a sign of danger," Hilario says in a later interview. "In a way, there's a sense of security now."

Still, some of the men are not letting their guard down. They still stay up late to watch for any attack. They are still wary of the other farmers, who are still seething with anger over the partial installation.

"Last Monday, some of them turned up at the hacienda with sticks spiked with nails, thinking there was going to be another installation," Hilario says.

She returned to Manila on April 12 to receive an award from the Institute of Politics and Governance and the Barangay Bayan Governance Consortium on behalf of nine TFM women hunger-strikers for committing their lives to peasants' struggle for freedom from landlessness and destitution.

Cause for optimism

She looked cheerful in a light-colored sleeveless blouse. Her gaunt look had been replaced by puffier cheeks, and her cropped hair had grown thicker. She says she had been sleeping a lot back home to make up for lost sleep.

"What's sad is that we can't cultivate the land yet," Hilario says, until the land has been clearly delineated. DAR had promised to do this after the Holy Week but the group is still waiting.

Until such time that DAR marks the area with bamboo poles, the beneficiaries have no choice but to do odd jobs—gather and sell bamboo and cogon grass for the men, and hawk vegetables and do laundry in the town proper for the women—to put food on the table.

Hilario, however, says the beneficiaries "know in their hearts" DAR Secretary Nasser Pangandaman would make good his word to mark the area and install the rest of the beneficiaries.

"He has displayed political will, and that has given us a lot of optimism," she says.

'I mortgaged my house to buy the land in 1974'

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—ROBERTO Cuenca, 66, comes from a long line of sugar farmers.

His father, Fernando Cuenca, was a leader of the sugar industry and the Jalandonis, on his mother side, also engaged in farming. Priest-turned-rebel Luis Jalandoni is a cousin of Cuenca.

Cuenca took up agriculture at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños although he did not finish the course.

The owner of Hacienda Velez Malaga in La Castellana says he acquired the property in 1974, through hard work.

"I mortgaged my house to buy the land and worked hard to pay back my debts," Cuenca says.

Of the 478-hectare farm in La Castellana, 286 hectares are planted to sugarcane while the rest are devoted to mahogany. Located 70 kilometers south of Bacolod City, the estate was formerly owned by the late Pacita Soriano.

An obligation to workers

When he acquired the property, Cuenca remembered the lesson he learned from his family: That he had an obligation to take care of his workers.

"I was brought up in a family that has engaged in farming for a living. We were taught to look out for the benefits of the workers," he said.

However, to the 102 members of Task Force Mapalad (TFM), Cuenca is the influential landowner who opposed their occupation of 144 hectares of his hacienda that were awarded to them by the Department of Agrarian Reform. (Twenty others in the original TFM list returned to the Cuenca fold.)

But to 198 other workers who have joined the Hacienda Malaga-Cuenca Multipurpose Cooperative and who are loyal to Cuenca say the plantation owner is an angel fighting to help them get their just share of the estate.

Gregorio Paclibar, TFM member and Hacienda Velez-Malaga Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries president, says fellow farmers had signed up to be CARP beneficiaries because they did not see any future under Cuenca.

Signing up also meant being kicked out of their jobs in the hacienda.

Original tillers

"The members of the co-op are the original tillers of the land, unlike many of those who are members of the TFM group," says Rodolfo Tupas Jr., a member of the cooperative and president of the Hacienda Malaga Independent Workers' Union.

Tupas notes that the day-care center, elementary school for children of the farm workers and many of their homes are located in the 144-hectare area granted to the TFM. Some of the cooperative members also recognized Cuenca's help in sending their children to school.

But TFM has maintained that Cuenca has used his influence to keep them away from the plantation.

"Powerful people have helped Cuenca prevent CARP from being implemented on his land," Paclibar said.

The TFM had accused Rep. Ignacio Arroyo (Neg. Occ., 5th district) and Malacañang of intervening for Cuenca. But Arroyo says his daughter Bianca and Cuenca's son Bobby have a son who is now 15, but his daughter has married someone else and now lives in the United States.

Deeply religious

Cuenca was also a Negros Occidental provincial board member during the Marcos years from 1981 to 86 and the president of the Asosacion de Agricultores de La Carlota for about 17 years and has become a director only recently.

He chairs the Confederation of Sugar Cooperatives, a group composed of about 60 cooperative members around the country that helps small farmers buy farm inputs, such as fertilizer collectively to bring down prices.

He is also a member of the religious group Bukas Loob sa Diyos and is married to Agnes with whom he has four children and 10 grandchildren.

Hacienda Velez-Malaga: A 'litmus test of political will'

From page A1

who formed a cooperative and opted to continue working for Cuenca, a close associate of Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, President Macapagal-Arroyo's brother-in-law.

"Why would we agree to something that would allow Cuenca to perpetually control the farm," says Gregorio Paclibar, 71, echoing the sentiment of the breakaway group that joined Task Force Mapalad.

An association of 18,000 workers in 312 haciendas funded by Catholic Church groups and nongovernment organizations, TFM provides technical and financial aid to farmers who want to cut the umbilical to their farm owners.

Harassing sprees and foxholes

But as goons went on nightly harassing sprees, TFM workers in the Hacienda dug foxholes to hide in when dogs bark to alert them of impending danger. One farmer died of heart attack as he hunkered down.

Out of desperation, 22 of them staged a hunger strike outside the DAR headquarters on Elliptical Road in Quezon City.

Because of Cuenca's ties to Malacañang (a son is father to a child of Iggy Arroyo's daughter), Presidential Adviser for Western Visayas Rafael Coscolluela went to see Ms Arroyo in a bid to break the impasse as media glare spotlighted on Velez-Malaga.

"Do what you think is right," Ms Arroyo told Coscolluela, paraphrasing Brutus in a scene out of Shakespeare's Julius Ceasar.

The TFM workers' fast was monitored by Malacañang, fearing embarrassment, as hunger strikers suffered fainting spells and went in and out of a nearby hospital. It was lifted after 30 days on March 22 when Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, escorted by police and army soldiers, settled an initial group of 57 TFM workers in Velez-Malaga.

Pangandaman agreed to Cuenca's request that the list of TFM beneficiaries be screened. Cuenca has claimed most of the 122 beneficiaries in the TFM roster (20 later returned to his fold) were not legitimate hacienda workers. To resolve the impasse, he wants to settle these people in the rear forested sections of his hacienda, not in the prime lands as earlier designated. And this is his "win-win" formula.

Betrayed, unjustly displaced

"We feel we have been betrayed and unjustly displaced by the DAR," says Romeo Caram, 53, vice president of the Malaga-Cuenca Cooperative. "We have been unjustly accused of instigating violence," he says.

"The issue is whether the rightful beneficiaries have been justly treated and that is a matter before the Supreme Court," says Iggy Arroyo, who has denied accusations that he has intervened with Malacañang in behalf of Cuenca.

Technically, the property is no longer owned by Cuenca, a fact he concedes. The Land Bank of the Philippines has paid him P22.6 million for the distribution of 120 ha to the 122 beneficiaries to whom a collective certificate of land ownership award (CLOA) has been issued. The land they were to occupy had previously been delineated.

"It is not fair that the TFM members were given prime land while the original tillers were given bones," Cuenca now says.

Uneasy calm

An uneasy calm prevails in Velez-Malaga. The upcoming planting season will determine if peace and tranquility will hold.

Still, what the hunger strikers achieved is unprecedented, says Jose Noel Olano, a member of the TFM board and a former DAR undersecretary. "It sends a message to the farmers that they can fight peacefully and owning a piece of the land they farm is not an impossible dream," he says.

"The context of this is that Negros Occidental is a litmus test," says Christian Monsod, a TFM volunteer lawyer, former chair of the Commission on Elections and a member of the panel that drafted the 1987 Constitution.

"This is where resistance is the greatest. This is where there's the most undistributed land. Landowners use two strategies: threat of violence and violence," says Monsod.

He says nine TFM members had been killed fighting for agrarian reform. Not one responsible for the deaths has been convicted, he said.

"This thing (agrarian reform) has not lived up to its promises because of lack of political will on the part of the government and this is demonstrated by this case," says Monsod, referring to Velez-Malaga.

Cuenca case emblematic

The Cuenca case is emblematic of the difficulty of implementing the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, or the CARP law of 1988, that President Corazon Aquino signed two years after she took power in the aftermath of the People Power Revolution.

DAR officials say there are some 20,000 cases similar to Velez-Malaga that are pending litigation and will take years to resolve.

A succession of Philippine Presidents before Aquino had undertaken land reform programs to ease poverty and serve social justice—the clarion call of leftist movements from Latin America to Asia.

The audacity and intensity of the programs matched the ebb and flow of peasant discontent. When passions cooled off, the task of eradicating social injustice and destitution in the nation beset by insurgencies and where 60 percent of its population lives below the poverty line was neglected.

Thirteen farmers were killed on Jan. 22, 1987, on Mendiola Bridge (now called Chino Roces Bridge) when police opened fire on thousands of peasant farmers marching on Malacañang to demand that Aquino implement her promised land reforms. The incident scuttled peace talks between the Aquino administration and communist guerrillas.

Perfidious exemptions

"The basic problem with Aquino's CARP was the perfidious exemptions, which caused its downfall," says Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, one of five agrarian reform secretaries during the Aquino administration. Santiago cited exceptions granted to Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac which Aquino's family owned.

The Agrarian reform program under Aquino was characterized by influence peddling and corruption in land purchases, says Santiago.

Other plantation owners, particularly on Negros island, followed the Hacienda Luisita example, holding on to their cane fields like crown jewels providing great wealth, power and influence.

There, for decades, a small group of sugar barons has used political influence, legal loopholes, cumbersome judicial processes and violence to frustrate any meaningful attempt to institute agrarian reform, keeping the nation a semi-feudal state and farm workers nothing more than serfs.

In Negros, farm hands are derisively referred to as *ulipon*. In the Ilonggo dialect, it translates to "slave."

The Aquino program sought to obtain 8 million ha of public and private lands for distribution to peasant farmers, thereby undercutting the appeal of communist insurgents.

Recipe for trouble

Pangandaman says after 18 years, DAR had distributed some 3.8 million ha of private agricultural land, accomplishing 80 percent of its target. (There isn't too much of a problem in parceling 4 million ha of public lands.)

Most of these distributed lands are covered by CLOAs, but these are not titles that can be used as collateral to secure loans. CLOAs are simply a first step to prove future ownership and only if the holders pay amortization and show in the long term that their enterprise is viable.

One senior DAR official says that the department, in a bid to "fast-track" land acquisition in the past decade, issued "collective CLOAs" to groups of beneficiaries. The determination of beneficiaries and the plots of land they will share was left to several people—the owners, the beneficiaries, DAR, local officials—provoking a rash of "inclusion-exclusion" proceedings and resulting in conflicts.

The official says of the land distributed, roughly 2 million ha are covered by collective CLOAs that landowners are now exploiting, thereby subverting the essence of land reform and providing fuel to a potential conflagration.

Kitchie Benedicto-Paulino, 59, says landowners are concerned genuine workers are being eased out by corrupt TFM and DAR officials who are putting in their protegees in the list of beneficiaries.

The daughter of the late Roberto Benedicto, a crony of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos who was the all powerful sugar czar during the martial law years, has mobilized support for Cuenca.

"He is not fighting the battle for himself. He does not need the land. He is doing this for his workers," says Paulino. "Legitimate beneficiaries are being left out," she says.

Paulino says the cries for justice by the pro-Cuenca workers have been muted by the "antics" of the hunger strikers and "communists." She rails that the TFM has delayed a settlement with workers in the Benedicto haciendas on her plan to "lease back" land that had been subdivided to farm workers.

Owners won't give up control

Her haciendas are in the same boat as Cuenca's. She is still negotiating to "lease back" from her workers lands distributed by DAR. She, in effect, wants to rent the lands she has given out so her managers can continue controlling them by helping the beneficiaries.

It takes roughly an investment of P50,000 to cultivate a hectare of sugar land and additional wherewithal to survive while waiting for harvest time—something that entrenches a culture of dependency on feudal lords.

"The landowners are giving up title to the lands, but they are not about to surrender control over their domain," says one DAR official. "This is the story of agrarian reform."

A small group of Benedicto farmers who had opted to go on their own has secured the assistance of TFM. This group is attempting to transform the 48 ha of land that had been distributed to them as a showcase of farm efficiency that could improve their lives without the intervention of their former landlord.

The TFM says its initiative in the Benedicto hacienda is one of its "success stories," giving hope to those it had touched that soon the nightmares will be over and their dreams will be within reach.

With reports from TJ Burgonio in Manila, Carla Gomez in Bacolod City and Cyril Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Talks to free seized Pinoys, Sokors begin

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—NIGERIAN OFFICIALS have begun negotiations with hostage-takers over freeing eight Filipinos and three South Koreans kidnapped in a predawn raid in Nigeria's oil-rich Delta, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Friday.

The talks lasted several hours Thursday night between the captors and officials of Nigeria's Rivers State government, but ended inconclusively with an agreement to meet again Friday, a ministry official said on condition of anonymity, citing the issue's sensitivity.

The hostage-takers asked for the meeting, the official said, citing information provided by Nigeria's government. He also said the captives were confirmed safe.

It was unclear who the captors are and what demands they made, the official said.

The 11 foreign workers were kidnapped at a power plant construction site of South Korea's Daewoo Engineering and Construction Co., about 30 kilometers northeast of Port Harcourt, Nigeria's southern oil hub. A Nigerian driver was also taken, but was later released.

The raid was one of three attacks Thursday that resulted in the kidnapping of at least 21 people and the death of a Nigerian soldier.

Such seizures are common in Africa's largest oil producer, where militants and criminals use them as leverage against the government, or to extract cash.

Unrest has plagued Nigeria's oil-rich southern delta region for years, and in recent months gunmen have stepped up a campaign against the oil industry, blowing up oil pipelines to cut production by a fifth and kidnapping scores of foreign workers. Most captives are released unharmed. *AP*

Ex-Comelec chair Santiago dies; 80

FORMER COMELEC CHAIR AND COURT OF Appeals Justice Vicente M. Santiago Jr. died on Thursday at the age of 80.

He is survived by his wife Guding and children Liza and Chug Sichon; Sammy and Toni Santiago; Cynthia and Al Urbano; Jojie and Ato Yap; and Third and Mary Anne Santiago.

Justice Santiago finished law at the University of the Philippines in 1952 and Masters of Law at Yale University in 1956. He was appointed judge in the Court of First Instance in 1968 and, two years later, was named to the Court of Appeals. He joined the Commission of Elections as commissioner in 1978 and became its chair from 1980 until 1985.

Upon retirement from public service, he joined the private sector, serving as member of the boards of various companies of Fortune Group until this year.

The body lies at the Christ the King Parish in Greenmeadows, Quezon City. Interment will be held tomorrow, May 6, at the Santiago Family mausoleum in San Mateo, Rizal, after an 8 a.m. funeral Mass.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations to be made in his honor to the Pugsong Pinoy Foundation of the Philippine General Hospital.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, May 5, 2007
4th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 13:44-52
Gospel: John 14:7-14

Jesus said to his disciples, "If you know me, you will know the Father also; indeed you know him and you have seen him."

Philip asked him, "Lord, show us the Father and that is enough." Jesus said to him, "What! I have been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever sees me sees the Father; how can you say: 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

"All that I say to you, I do not say of myself. The Father who dwells in me is doing his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; at least believe it on the evidence of these works that I do.

"Truly, I say to you, the one who believes in me will do the same works that I do; and he will even do greater than these, for I am going to the Father. Everything you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And everything you ask in calling upon my Name, I will do."

Commentary

Paul and Barnabas preach first to the Jews but resistance is strong among them. And so the Gentiles begin to come into the Church rejoicing that the Word of God is offered to them as well—no one is excluded from the invitation. With the preaching of the Gospel and the welcome of strangers and foreigners, aliens, slaves—those considered unclean—comes persecution for those who preach. This is to be expected—as it was with Jesus, with the early Church. Why is it not with us?

We preach the Trinity, and the Father, Jesus the Word made flesh, and the Spirit witness to the truth. Belief is expressed not only in words, but more clearly in deeds, in the works that we do, as Jesus did. We can ask anything of the Father in Jesus' name. Perhaps what we need to ask for is the courage to preach in deed and word so that others are drawn to the dwelling place of God—the Trinity.

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TU bets laugh off Cory tap; Ping points to Isafp

From page A1

Ralph Recto, also of TU, said he could not understand why anyone would want to tap Aquino's phone when she was no longer active in politics.

But he said wiretapping was reprehensible whether conducted on an incumbent or former President, or anyone else. "We cannot treat wiretapping victims differently, one with disdain and the other with sympathy. We should be consistent in condemning illegal eavesdropping whenever and on whomever it is employed," he said.

On Thursday, Aquino called a press conference to announce that a wiretapping device connected to her phone at her residence on Times Street, Quezon City, was discovered on Wednesday by linemen.

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. confirmed the discovery of the device, and Noynoy Aquino subsequently called on the government to arrest those behind the wiretap.

The military quickly denied involvement.

Recto said it would be unfair to immediately point to the military as the culprit, "at a time when a how-to manual in making a nuclear bomb can be downloaded from the Internet."

"My point is, we may not be able to find the real culprits if we only focus on the usual suspects," he said.

'Isafp did it'

In an interview with the INQUIRER in Manila, GO candidate Panfilo Lacson quoted what he called his "mole" in the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces as saying that it was the Isafp that installed the tap on Aquino's phone.

Lacson said he was able to validate this because the device found in a PLDT "cross-connect cabinet" was of the same type he had turned over to the Isafp when the now defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, which he once headed, was done with it.

He said there were Isafp agents in the task force.

Lacson said the tap on Aquino's phone appeared to have been intended to "muddle" the 2005 "Hello Garci" wiretap scandal that led to allegations of vote rigging in the 2004 presidential election.

Either that, or the Isafp is "getting sloppy," he said.

"These are illegal activities that, I am sure, are not covered by a court order. The equipment was discovered in a junction box. It seems they want to muddle the 'Garci' issue and show that any Tom, Dick and Harry can just conduct wiretap operations," Lacson said.

"Why did they have to put it in a junction box [where it may be seen by linemen]? One can listen in even from a private residence. Why didn't they set up a safe house?" he said.

He added that it was safe to assume that every GO personality was a target of the wiretapping.

Lacson was a longtime intelligence officer in the now defunct Philippine Constabulary, and used a wide intelligence network when he headed a task force of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission and later the entire Paoctf.

No way

But given the "very crude" device found in the PLDT phone box, the military can't be involved, said National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, who has launched an inquiry into the incident.

"Those are very old methods that the intelligence services [of the military] no longer use. In my inquiries, [I verified that] the AFP is not involved," he said in a phone interview.

Gonzales, one of the key members of the Cabinet cluster on national security, said the military's intelligence units were using more advanced equipment.

"There are [legitimate surveillance operations], those that have court orders," he said.

He added that he would still investigate the other intelligence units of the government, including the police, to see if they had anything to do with what he described as a "very crazy" incident. But he earlier expressed his opinion that the wiretap could not have been a government operation.

Gonzales would not rule out the opposition as having to do with the wiretap.

"Many of those in the opposition are capable of doing that," he said.

Don't get excited

Gabriel Claudio, President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser, said the opposition "should not get excited about this story" because no one knew for sure who had planted the listening device.

"The fact is we don't know the facts. We don't know who has done this, and whether it was an authentic wiretap or a dummy to create a convenient political controversy," CLaudio said in a text message.

POLICE investigator shows bugging device recovered from a PLDT transmission box near the house of former President Corazon Aquino at Times Street in Quezon City. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"The proper thing to do is let the authorities investigate this matter thoroughly so that the culprits can be identified and punished, irrespective of their motives," he added.

Asked to comment, GO candidate Alan Peter Cayetano said the opposition did not need "convenient controversies" because it continued to enjoy public support.

Cayetano said Claudio's remarks were "totally out of sync with reality."

"In our people's mind, the fertilizer scam, the 'Garci' wiretapping scandal, the Northrail and Piatco scandals and the legitimacy of President Arroyo are alive, and there's no need for reminders," he told the INQUIRER by phone.

Cayetano said it was normal to point a finger at the administration "because they have a track record of monitoring their critics, of wiretapping, and then lying about it."

"We're not excited about it. We're simply sending a warning to fellow oppositionists and critics of government that the extrajudicial killings, wiretapping and invasion of our privacy, as well as political harassment, will continue, and that we should all be wary, informed and prepared," he said.

Me, too

Saying he knew whereof he spoke, former President Fidel Ramos said the tapping of Aquino's phone was downright "shameful," "saddening" and a subject for thorough investigation.

"[T]rue or not, it is really so saddening to have a former President, even just a former high official, being bugged by somebody," Ramos said. "I know, because I was a victim of that before."

He added that the matter was embarrassing for the country.

Ramos spoke with reporters after attending a lecture series at the National Defense College of the Philippines in Camp Aguinaldo, where he was the guest speaker.

Looking at media photographs of the listening device, Ramos said it looked "so primitive."

"So [it must have been installed] a long, long time ago," back when Aquino was newly widowed, he said.

Asked when he became the subject of surveillance, Ramos said he was no longer President when his cell phone was bugged. He said he did not pay much attention to it, and never found out who was behind it.

Call in the NBI

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Aquino should ask the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the wiretap and stop speculations on the matter.

Asked if this was a matter of concern given the person involved, he said it would first have to be proven if there was an actual wiretap.

"That's why I am saying, have it investigated. Otherwise, suspicions will run wild and eventually Channel 7 will say it's the administration [who's responsible]," he said.

Gonzalez said he himself was not interested in tapping Aquino's phone because he believed nothing could be gained from doing so.

He was also displeased at speculation that the administration was behind the wiretap: "That is too much speculation. Everything that happens is attributable to the administration. Pretty soon, if you just step on cow manure, it's the administration that's guilty."

Asked about the claim that the wiretap was a gimmick to gain mileage for Noynoy Aquino in the homestretch of the senatorial campaign, Gonzalez said that could be a possibility.

But if the device is genuine, the Aquino family may be in "danger of being monitored," he said. *Reports from Cynthia D. Balana in Kidapawan; Norman Bordadora, Michael Lim Ubac, Christine O. Avendaño, Leila B. Salaverria and Juliet Labog-Javellana in Manila*

What Pope, Bin Laden, 'Borat' have in common

From page A1

world's 100 most influential people.

The fourth annual list, which hit newsstands yesterday, omits US President George W. Bush for the first time but includes Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

The "artists and entertainers" category includes Hollywood heavyweights Martin Scorsese, Cate Blanchett and heartthrobs Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio, along with fashion model Kate Moss.

Pop sensation Justin Timberlake is named along with Senegalese musician Youssou N'Dour, while former US Vice President Al Gore's shift to environmental campaigner sees him nominated in the "scientists and thinkers" category.

In no particular order

The list, which is designed to recognize "the men and women whose power, talent or moral example is transforming our world," does not appear in any order or give the magazine's reasons why some people were chosen over others.

The "leaders and revolutionaries" category features Queen Elizabeth II, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni—in an entry penned by US counterpart Condoleezza Rice—and Rice herself, appearing for a fourth year running.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger makes a showing next to Raul Castro, the younger brother of Cuban leader Fidel Castro, Indian Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi and Chinese President Hu Jintao.

Other politicians in the mix include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Liu

POPE BENEDICT XVI

BIN LADEN

COHEN

BUSH: Not on the list

Qi, head of the 2008 Beijing Olympics committee.

Besides Rice, US talk show host Oprah Winfrey is the only person to have appeared all four years, featuring in the "heroes and pioneers" section in an entry written by anti-apartheid campaigner Nelson Mandela.

Other "heroes" include billionaire investor and philanthropist Warren Buffett, rubbing shoulders with tennis champion Roger Federer, footballer Thierry Henry and Chinese online activist Zeng Jinyan.

Actor and director George Clooney, who has been campaigning to raise awareness about the situation in the Sudanese region of Darfur, is meanwhile named along with Parkinson's disease sufferer and fellow actor Michael J. Fox.

British entrepreneur Richard Branson makes a show in the "builders and titans" section along with Chad Hurley and Steve Chen, the co-founders of video sharing website YouTube, and luxury brand guru and LVMH boss Bernard Arnault.

Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, the world's fifth richest man, also appears alongside Apple chief Steve Jobs. *AFP*

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Electrification of entire RP completed next year, says DOE

By Michael Lim Ubac

IT'S ALREADY THE 21ST CENTURY, YET A staggering number of households in 1,990 barangays have no electricity, the Energy Department admitted yesterday.

During the ceremonial switch-on in Malacañang for the electrification of 128 rural barangays in the province of Masbate, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla reported to President Macapagal-Arroyo that 95 percent of barangay around the country have been energized.

The President interrupted him, asking about the exact number of villages still burning their midnight oil, or kerosene, to be exact.

"In my administration, how many barangay have been electrified?" asked Ms Arroyo in front of a crowd composed of US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, business leaders and other energy officials.

Although caught off guard, Lotilla told her that under the Arroyo presidency, "we now have electrified 39,900, we only have 1,900 barangays ... for energization."

He then pledged to energize every barangay by 2008.

The President witnessed the ceremonial signing of the power supply agreement between Masbate Electric Cooperative Inc. (Maselco) and D.M. Consunji, Inc. (DMCI) Holdings, and presentation highlighting the 95 percent milestone for the nationwide barangay electrification.

The President, together with Kenney, Lotilla and Mirant president Jose Leviste Jr., ceremonially switched on the 39,955 energized barangays in the country.

Of the 1,990 barangays with no electricity yet, the energy department has programmed 1,106 to be energized this year.

Maselco board chair Elpido Lim said Maselco's franchise covered only 14 towns and one city of Masbate, or 47 percent of more than 400 barangay.

The rest of barangay in the province were covered by another distributor, he said.

He said the 13-megawatt plant to be put up by DMCI in Mobo, Masbate will use a hybrid technology—diesel and coal plant.

Masbate is currently depending on a 8-megawatt oil-based power plant in Masbate, which is owned by the National Power Corp, and this power supply is usually interrupted for several hours every day.

With the new plant, Maselco hopes to service the province' entire customer base of 560,000 people, up from its present coverage of 125,000.

Erap questions court's urgency

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA IS disturbed about the Sandiganbayan's apparent urgency in deciding his six-year-old plunder case.

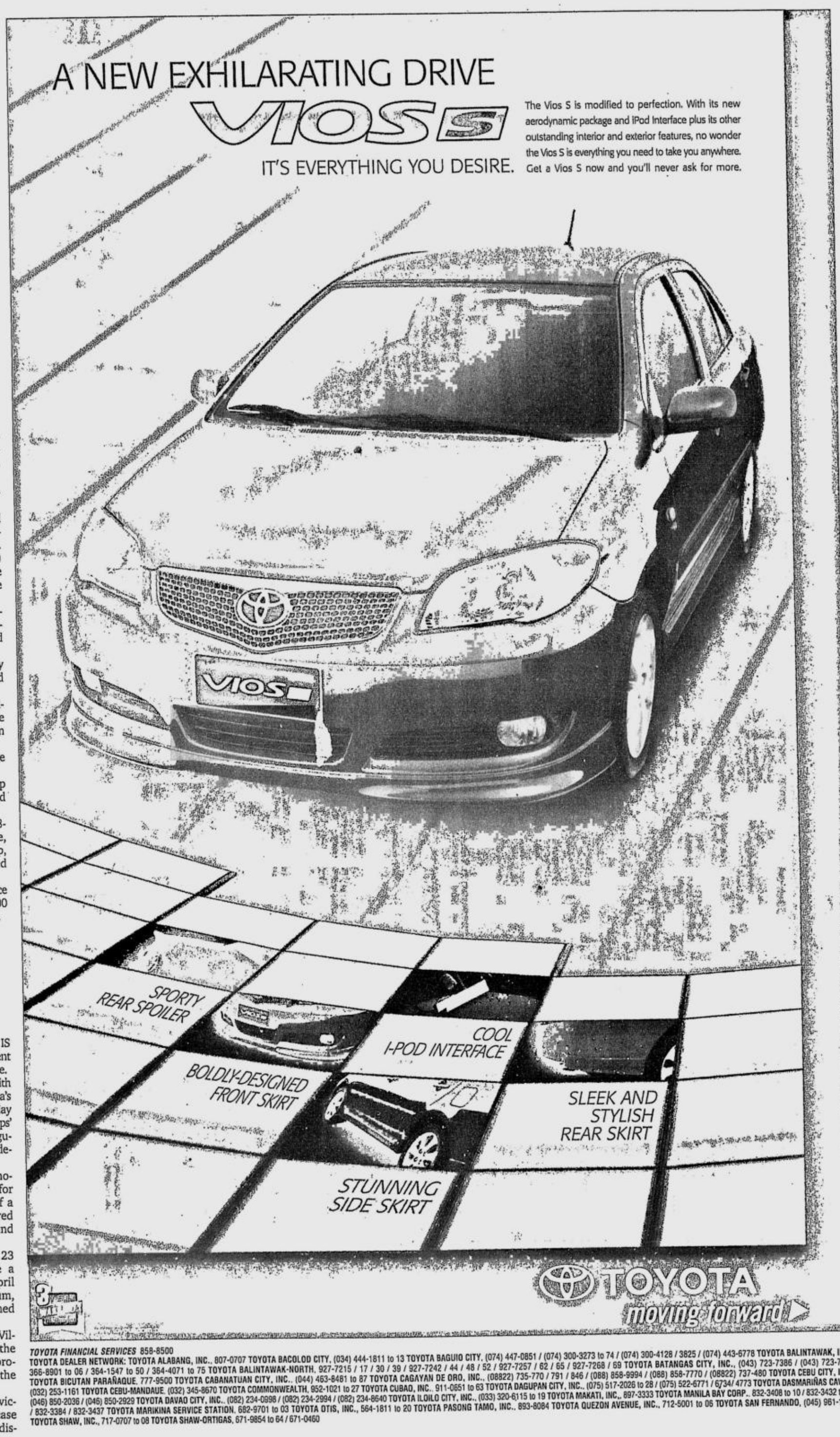
In a two-page manifestation recently filed with the antigraft court's Special Division, Estrada's lead counsel Rene Saguisag stated that the May 25 deadline the court has set in filing both camps' memoranda containing a summary of their arguments and evidence was a "totally unexpected development which disturbs us no end."

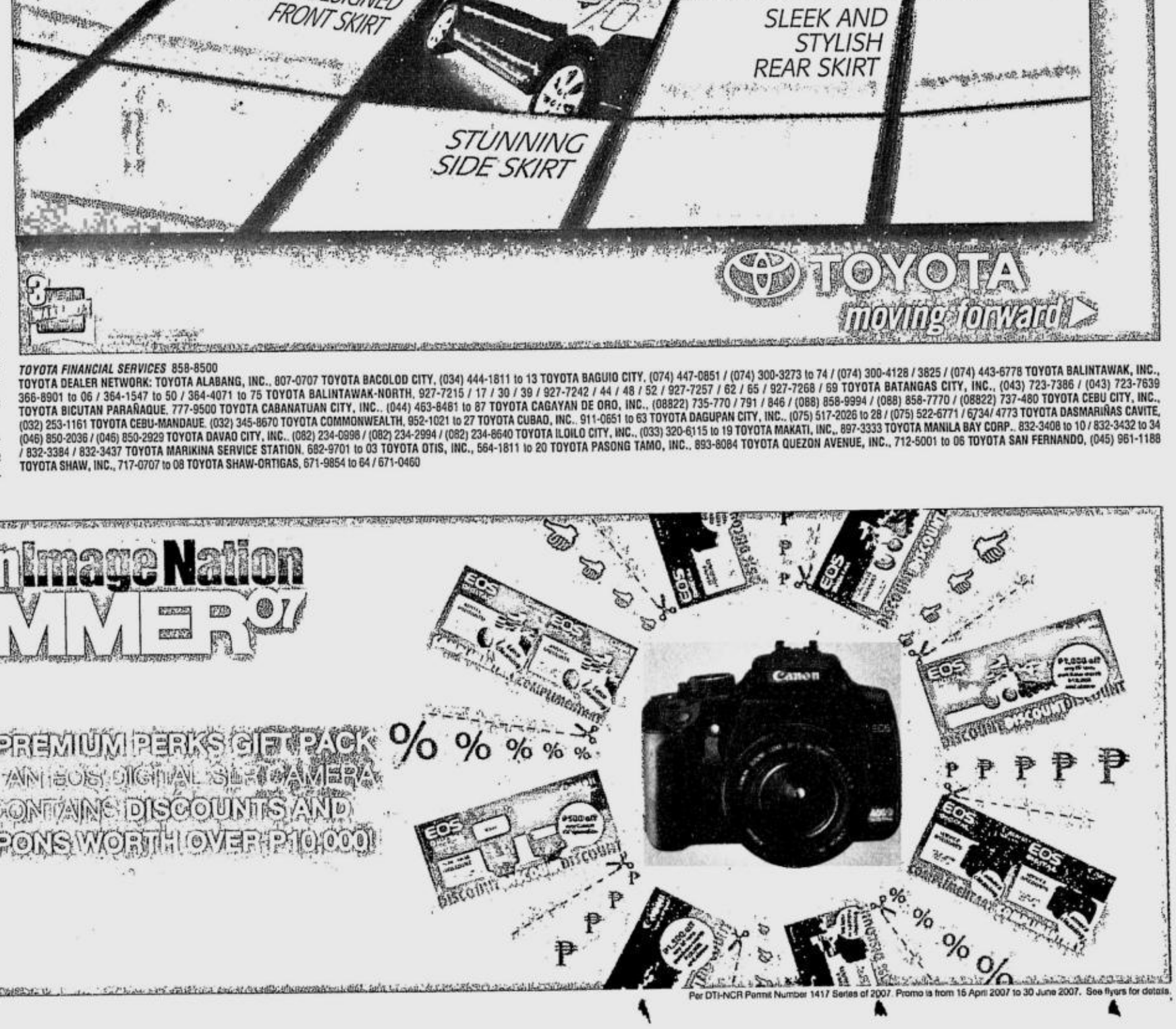
"Even now this Special Division gives notice that it would not entertain any motion for extension in filing our memorandum as if a certain inflexible timetable is being adhered to for reasons we can only speculate on and best known to [the court]," he added.

The court issued a resolution on April 23 giving the prosecution and the defense a "non-extendible period of 30 days" from April 25 to submit their respective memorandum, after which the plunder case will be deemed submitted for decision.

Meanwhile, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said yesterday that questioning the deadline was a mere ploy to delay the promulgation of the case and was telling that the defense was afraid of conviction.

Earlier, he expressed confidence of conviction as they were able to build a solid case against Estrada, whose counsels failed to dispute their evidence.





Burgos family disappointed by slow pace of gov't inquiry

By Kristine L. Alave and Fe Zamora

THE FAMILY OF JONAS JOSEPH "JJ" BURGOS yesterday expressed disappointment over the slow pace of the government inquiry into his disappearance.

Jose Luis 'JL' Burgos said the family had yet to be apprised by investigators on the progress of the case. "Today (Friday), we received no information on the situation. That's an honest answer... We are not accusing anyone. We haven't got any facts," he said on the sidelines of a march-rally to protest JJ's disappearance and that of two others.

"I'm disappointed. I find the investigation slow," JL said, adding that the police had only one solid clue—the plate number of the car that took his brother away.

"I want to challenge GMA (President Macapagal-Arroyo) to find and release my brother. The government has the responsibility to protect its citizens. If they don't do it, they are violating international human rights law," JL said.

Members of the Burgos family, their friends and supporters, activists, and defenders of human rights during the Marcos era marched under the scorching sun from Pioneer Street in Mandaluyong City to the People Power Monument on Edsa.

Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo and Teodoro Casiño and members of Anakpawis, another militant party-list group, also joined the protest march, as did Makati Mayor Jojo Binay, ex-Sen. Rene Saguisag and Ed Araullo (all members of Mabini, the group of lawyers who defended Joe Burgos and victims of human rights violations during martial law).

Also present was former Press Secretary Rod Reyes, who belonged to the same generation of journalists as Joe Burgos and Satur Ocampo.

Police estimated that about 150 took part in the march. Organizers put the figure at about 200.

Edith Burgos, JJ's mother, said the family had received "feelers" from civilians who had witnessed her son's abduction.

She said she recently received a call from a man who told her to talk to a security guard at the Ever Gotesco mall, where JJ was last seen.

"He said he was waiting for his boss at that time. He asked me to talk to the security guard at the mall," she said, adding:

"I am thankful for the support, for the calls that I received giving us bits of information about the abduction."

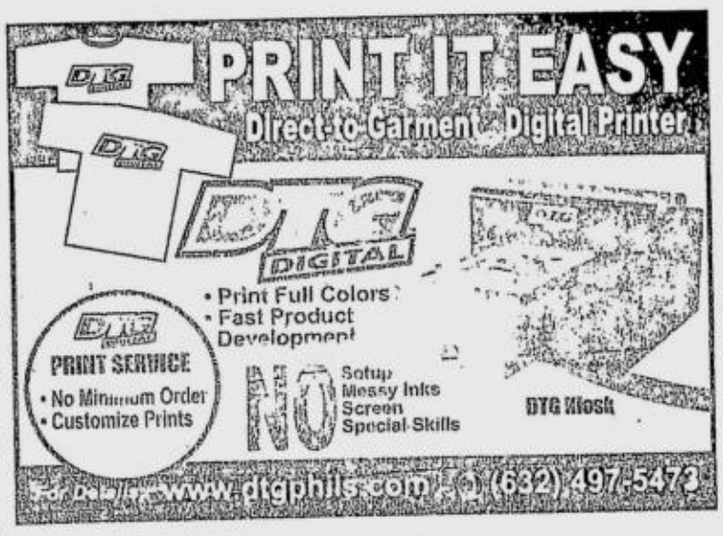
JL Burgos said his family was holding well despite the stress and the worry.

He said his brother's disappearance had brought some positive things: "We now realize that our father had many friends and supporters. And the issue of forced disappearances was resurrected."

He also said his family and friends had organized the Free Jonas Burgos Movement to pressure the government to solve the cases of abduction and to highlight the plight of the families of victims of forced disappearances.

The march-rally provided an occasion for comparing the methods used by security forces in "arresting" activists during the martial law years.

"And we thought Colonel [Rolando] Abadilla was the worst. At least he was in uniform and he introduced himself properly whenever he arrested people," said Lourdes "Chuchay" Fernandez, former editor in chief of Malaya.



Burgos case: EU envoy shocked

From page A1

this suggests about the culture of impunity in this country," MacDonald said.

"As long as the killings and abductions are taking place, [an investigation] is not enough; unless these stop, it won't be enough," he told an audience that included other foreign diplomats invited by the CHR.

MacDonald, who recalled having frequently read the newspaper Malaya especially when Joe Burgos was still its publisher in the 1980s, apparently made special mention of Jonas Burgos' case, as indicated by the last-minute scribbles he had made on the margins of a prepared speech.

P58-M project

Ironically, the latest in a series of EC statements lamenting the rise of politically motivated crimes under the Arroyo administration was made on the same occasion that the commission granted another hefty sum for the promotion of human rights in the Philippines and three other Southeast Asian nations.

MacDonald and CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing yesterday jointly signed a P58-million, EC-funded project for the improvement of human rights "mechanisms" in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

The major activities under the project include meetings, conferences or workshops aimed at spreading human rights awareness in the region and sharing "best practices" in rights protection and pushing for these in each country's policies or legislative agenda.

Asked in an interview if the continuing killings and forced disappearances would now sway the EC into reconsidering its policy of extending grants to the Philippines, MacDonald said: "I'm not convinced that cutting development assistance—using it as a political weapon—is a good tactic."

The diplomat also observed that political violence was "growing very rapidly as we get closer to elections" on May 14. He said this was "not unusual in the Philippines."

'Not a joke'

But even National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said he was "scared" about Jonas Burgos' fate.

"I've been looking for him even before [news of his disappearance] came out in the newspapers," Gonzales said in a phone interview. "We need to find him because this is not a joke. This is a big blow to the reputation of the government. I don't know why these things are happening at this time."

Gonzales said some bishops had called him earlier to help search for Burgos, a 36-year-old agriculturist who had been working closely with peasant farmers, and who was abducted on April 28 at the Ever Gotesco Mall in Quezon City.

He said he had mobilized intelligence sources to look for the young Burgos upon the instruction of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The President is definitely alarmed. She called me up [and told me] to look for him," Gonzales said.

But Gonzales said he had no clues so far as to the whereabouts of the young Burgos and who might have been behind his abduction.

"He's not in any military camp," Gonzales said.

Asked what that meant, he said: "I'm scared. But we will not stop [our search]."

Gonzales said Jonas Burgos' abduction could not have come at a worst time.

"This tragic incident is not good for the government. When you have those political killings and disappearances, what image is being created? That the government [is not in control]," he said.

Gonzales said he had been studying Jonas Burgos' background to help determine who might be behind his abduction.

"I want to know who Jonas really is. Is he just a peasant volunteer? I want to have a profile of him," Gonzales said.

'Land of lawlessness'

Amnesty International campaign coordinator Wilnor Papa said Jonas Burgos' disappearance had reinforced the Philippines' image as a "land of lawlessness."

Papa said the disappearance was alarming: "For [the abductors] to do this to a son of a great Filipino is a slap on the faces not only of human rights defenders, but also of all Filipinos. His father is like a national hero; he's done a lot for the country."

According to Papa, the disappearance was proof that the country was heading to an era reminiscent of the "wild, wild West where lawlessness was the norm."

"Nobody is getting arrested and jailed. It's no wonder investors and tourists are pulling out of the country," he said in a phone interview. "If there's, anything good that should come out of this, it would be to rouse Filipinos to demand justice and a stop to the [killings] and disappearances."

Papa said that to show it was serious in cracking the case, the government should take concrete steps by conducting a thorough investigation and arresting the suspects.

"It's not a case of who did it. It's a case of what the government should do about it. Beyond mere pronouncements, it should do something concrete. They say they're doing something about it, but how come these things are still happening?" he said, adding:

"The government is tasked to protect its citizens and their human rights. If it can't do this, it's useless."

Warning

Danilo Ramos of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said he had advised the members of the Alyansang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (AMP) to be careful about security in view of Jonas Burgos' disappearance.

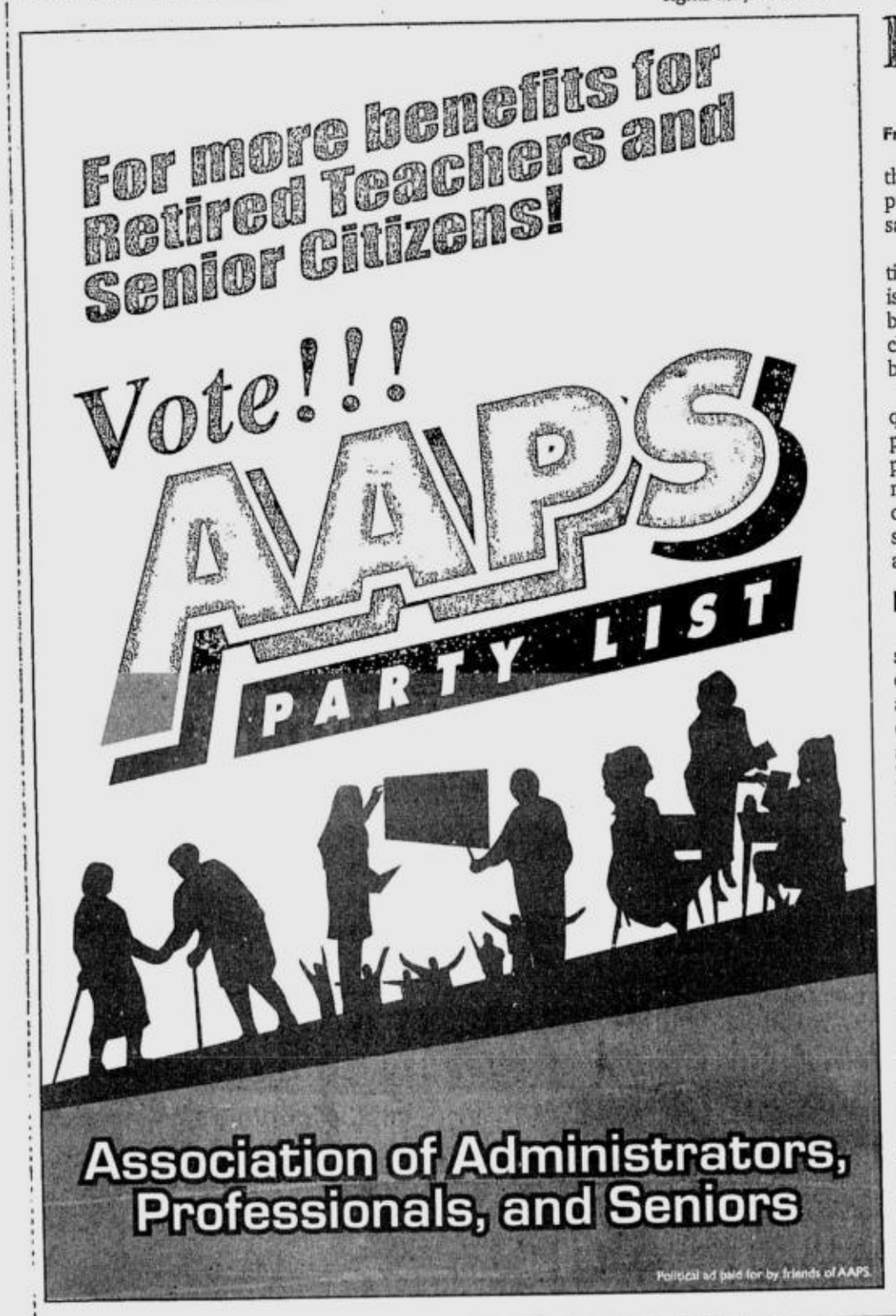
"They should be conscious of their security while doing their job. We gave them this advisory at the height of the killings and disappearances in 2006, and we reiterated it during our recent meeting late last month," Ramos told the INQUIRER.

Half of the 191 who had disappeared since 2001 came from the ranks of farmers, according to Ramos.

Jonas Burgos had been training AMP members in organic farming and sustainable agriculture since 1999 in Bulacan, where the Burgos family lives on a farm.

Having worked that long with the group, he is considered a volunteer of the AMP, which is the KMP's provincial chapter in Bulacan.

"If [the abductors] can't get the officials, they target those next in line," KMP information officer Carl Ala said.



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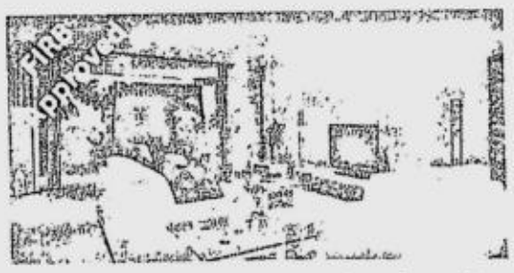

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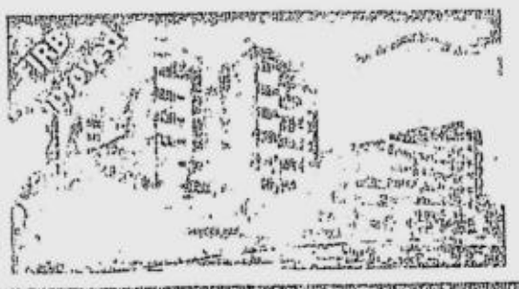

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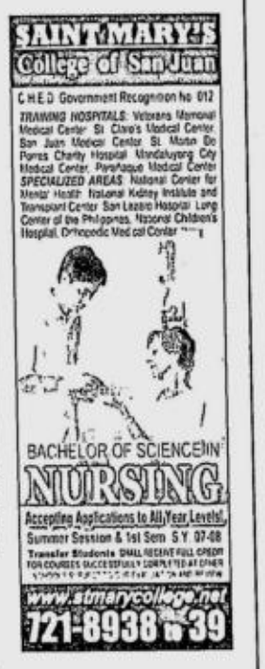
Bush attending Asean summit

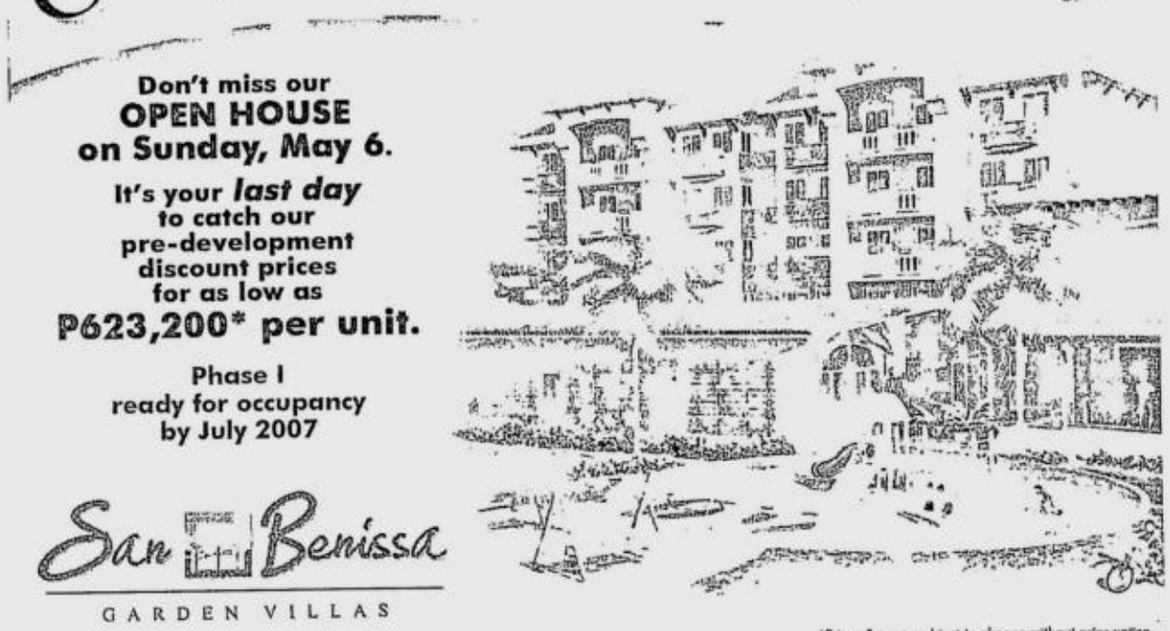
WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush is expected to hold his first summit with all 10 Southeast Asian leaders, including the region's most troublesome member, Myanmar, in September.

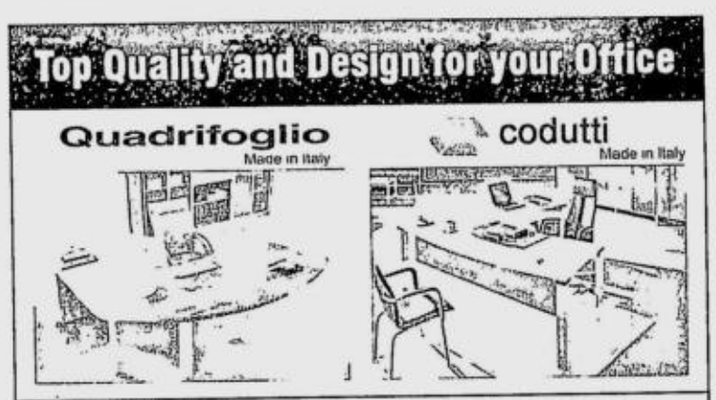
The landmark meeting in Singapore is aimed at highlighting 30 years of official ties between Washington and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said Thursday.

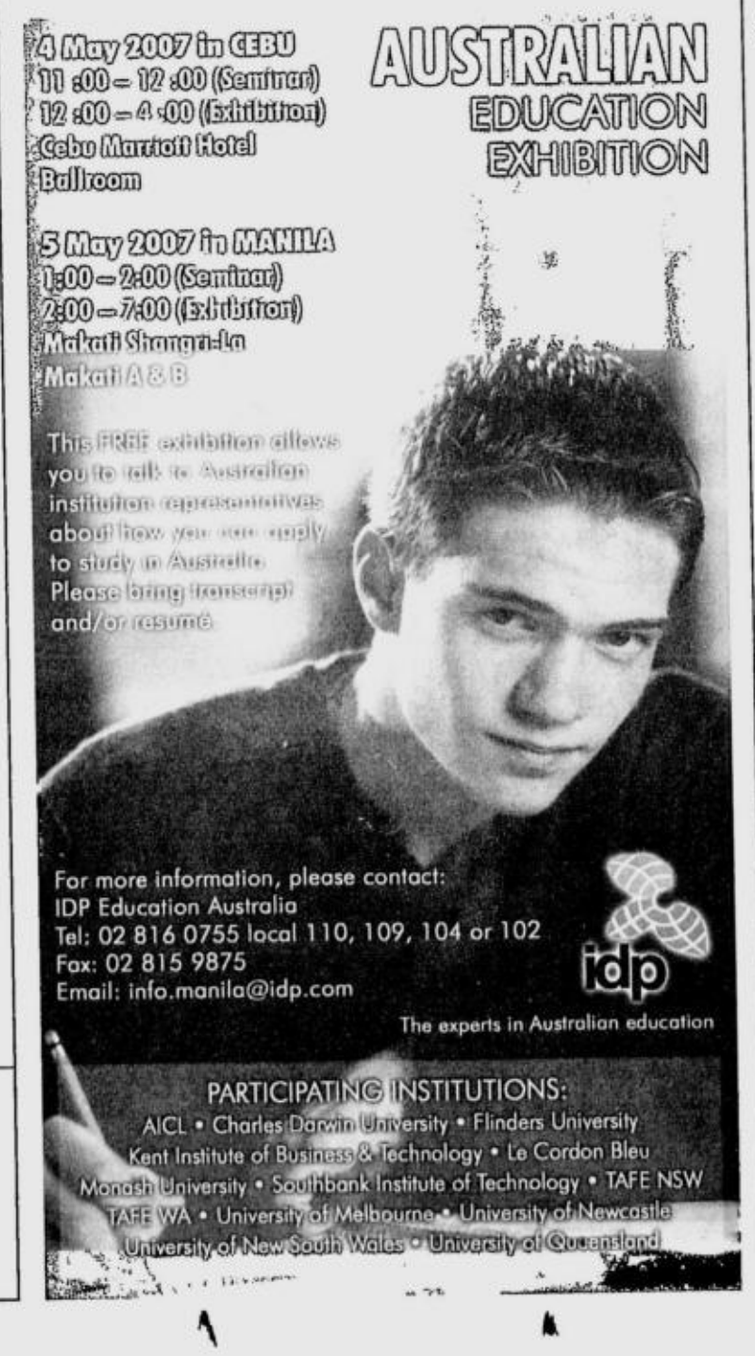
President Bush has visited Southeast Asia twice since he came to office in 2001, "and we look forward to his third visit when he attends the Asean-US Commemorative Summit in Singapore in September," Lee said at a forum in Washington ahead of talks with Bush at the White House on Friday.

Noting that Bush's predecessor Bill Clinton had also visited Southeast Asia three times, Lee said, "this bipartisan engagement is encouraging." Bush has over the last couple of years met annually with leaders of seven Asean states—Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—which are also members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum—at the sidelines of the forum's annual talks. *AFP*









PHILIPPINE DAIL

Deadliest 24 hours: 11 dead

From page A1

dates should tell their supporters to follow the law," Calderon said.

The group of Mayor Luna was returning from the wake of her grandfather when they were ambushed in the boundary of the villages of Pang-ot and Bai in Lagayan town.

Police said Luna owned the Mitsubishi Pajero that the victims were using but the mayor was not with the group as she had left earlier for Bangued, the capital town of Abra.

Worst in Abra

Luna is running for representative of the province's lone district against Gov. Vicente Valera and three other candidates.

Police identified the fatalities as Bai barangay captain Romero Guyang, Eduardo Guyang, Selima Caleflores, Jeson Battalao, Bali Rubeo and Darwin Sitnagen.

Luna said five of the victims were either her nephews or cousins. Three other people in the Pajero were wounded in the 1 p.m. attack.

The group came from a wake of a village elder in Pang-ot and was unarmed, police said.

"This is the worst [act of] political violence yet [in Abra]. I already have many cases piling up on my desk," Abra police director Senior Supt. Alexander Pumecha said.

The gunmen fled on foot.

Luna belongs to a group of local politicians opposing Valera. A member of that group, La Paz Mayor Marc Ysrael Bernos, was shot dead in January last year as he was watching a basketball game at the La Paz town center.

In 2004, an Army soldier who survived an ambush claimed he and a slain colleague were targeted by an Army colonel for failing to carry out an assassination plot against Luna.

ABRA Gov. Vicente Valera

ABRA MAYOR Cecilia Luna

Valera, whom Luna had blamed for the plot, denied involvement. Valera was also implicated in the Dec. 16, 2006 murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. as its alleged mastermind.

'Who else?'

The governor has not been charged with the crime. But he was indicted for possessing unlicensed high-powered firearms.

Valera also denied involvement in the slaying of Bersamin.

A police official said the gunmen in the Friday attack might have assumed that Luna was in the Pajero when they fired at the vehicle.

"We all know who did it. Who else has the money to finance this ambush?" Luna said.

"This is the work of desperate people. If they think this will dissuade me from (running), they don't know me," she said in Ilocano.

Luna, Valera and other candidates in Abra last month signed a peace covenant that was initiated by the Commission on Elections and the Cordillera police.

Abra is one of the provinces that have been placed under Comelec control as part of government efforts to curb violence.

Second time

Mayor Aranas and eight armed bodyguards had just attended a reunion of the family of Dr. Leonides Soria when they encountered a group of NPA rebels at around 3 p.m.

A few days before May 2004 elections, Aranas was also abducted by NPA guerillas after he supposedly failed to pay their "permit to campaign" fees (PTC). He was released a few days later after paying an undetermined amount of money.

In a phone interview, Soria said the mayor had just left his (Soria's) house to conduct a campaign sortie when security escorts of the mayor saw a band of armed men.

The mountain village is about 15 km from the town proper.

Soria said residents told Aranas' group that the armed men were NPA rebels.

"The mayor's escorts fired at them. They were trying to protect the mayor from the NPAs," he said.

Soria said Aranas and his group decided to retreat and take cover in his house after sensing they were about to be overpowered.

"The exchange of gunfire was deafening. We were really scared," Soria said.

Col. Romeo Chan, commanding officer of the 204th Army Brigade, confirmed that Aranas and his men were involved in a gunfight with the rebels but could not give details.

Soria said Aranas and two bodyguards ran to one of the rooms of the house while shooting it out with the NPAs but that the mayor decided to surrender at around 4:45 p.m. after his men ran out of ammunition.

He said Aranas also wanted to surrender to prevent further bloodshed.

Mayor berated

"The mayor was forced to surrender because they were trapped inside our house," he said.

Two of the mayor's bodyguards were confirmed dead, both of them members of the Philippine Army, Soria said.

Soria said the armed men, who identified themselves as NPA guerrillas, immediately went into the house after hearing Aranas' plea.

Soria said he heard one of the rebels berate Aranas for having soldiers in his campaign team.

Then the rebels took Aranas and two police escorts at gunpoint and escaped to the hills, Soria said.

It took a while before military and police units arrived.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to contact Aranas on his cellular phone.

Late last night the Aranas' staff told the INQUIRER the mayor had been safely released.

2 more fatalities

Pola, a small coastal town south of Oriental Mindoro, is also the hometown of Vice President Noli de Castro.

In another incident yesterday, one soldier was killed in a clash between Army troopers and security men of former Mayor Eduardo Villanueva Jr., a son of Jesus is Lord head Bro. Eddie Villanueva. *(See story this page.)*.

In Daraga, Albay, retired Chief Insp. Enrique Bausa was shot dead by two gunmen late Thursday afternoon after reportedly refusing to pay campaign fees to the NPA.

Bausa, an independent candidate, was shot by two assailants on his head, abdomen and back.

Chief Insp. Joe Capinpin, Daraga police chief, said the victim was shot at close range and the assailants simply "walked away as if nothing happened."

Bausa worked for 33 years in the police force and served as chief of police in Daraga in 1998.

Grenade attack

In Nueva Vizcaya, Aritao Mayor Ruben Sayo and his family survived a grenade attack on Friday morning.

Sayo said he, his wife and their three sons were sleeping in their house in Aritao when two explosions awoke them at around 1:30 a.m.

The mayor and his family were unhurt.

In Nueva Ecija, a barangay coordinator of the local party Bagaong lakas ng Nueva Ecija was gunned down on Thursday in Gapan City.

Police said Emmanuel Tolentino, 58, a political leader of reelectionist Mayor Ernesto Nativadad, was driving his Suzuki Vitara when one of two men on a motorcycle shot him. *With reports from Alcuin Papa, Nikko Dizon, Melvin Gascon and Ben Moses Ebreo, Inquirer Northern Luzon, Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon, and Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

AN ALLEGED military, killed in a shootout w
Philippine National Police's Scene of the Cri

Ambush, 'cri

From page A1

Bantay, whose nominee is retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan.

But Palaparan denied the soldiers were his people, saying: "They were not my men."

"If there are people who are helping me, that's up to them. They are not under my instructions," the controversial retired Army general said on ANC network. "I had nothing to do with what happened."

Villanueva is the brother of Rep. Joel Villanueva of the party-list group Cibac (Citizens Battle Against Corruption), which is affiliated with the JIL.

Conflicting claims

Central Luzon police director Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan said JIL leaders claimed the incident was

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Gringo bares meeting with GMA

From page A1

think you are innocent, then go through due process," Honasan said, quoting Ms Arroyo.

"There was no commitment, and I did not also ask for a commitment. I just wanted to clarify the issues and clear the air," Honasan yesterday told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"If I had a deal with Malacañang, why are they still trying to upgrade my case? There is an effort to cancel my bail and send me back to jail. This is harassment," he also said.

Honasan said he went there to deliver a letter to the President where he also asked to be clarified about the cases against him, especially after the DOJ had ordered to upgrade the charges for the fourth time.

He said the meeting with the President was arranged by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and retired Justice Hugo Gutierrez, "who are my legal advisers."

"I am in the middle of the campaign, trying to make up for lost time, and they try to pull me out from the campaign to attend a court hearing. This is harassment," Honasan said.

Ill-advised move

GO senatorial bet Panfilo "Ping" Lacson questioned his mistah's decision to meet with the President.

"If I have a case, why would I talk to PGMA? I won't go to PGMA. You should be consistent whether you're administration or opposition," Lacson told reporters yesterday.

"That is an ill-advised move on the part of my classmate. People cannot help but perceive or at least suspect there's something going on between him and PGMA. If I were him I would not do that. People are looking at a candidate's consistency. If they see you lose consistency, you lose a lot of votes," said Lacson. "But I hope it will not cost him votes, or [that] he gets a bad perception from this. After all, I am voting for him, I'm supporting him."

Lacson was at a loss as to why Honasan approached the President.

"Why would he do that? I really don't know [if there's a deal]. I still believe in his integrity. We cannot prevent people from speculating, and that's bad," he said.

Lacson also questioned why the President would give special access to the person whom the government has accused of leading a mutiny against her.

Reconciliation?

In contrast, Team Unity senatorial bets Vicente "Tito" Sotto and Michael Defensor welcomed the news of Honasan's meeting with the President.

"I am not surprised at all by the meeting. We had discussed the matter before that the best way to help the country move forward was to have reconciliation," said Sotto, a close ally of Honasan.

Defensor said the President's willingness to keep her doors open even to Honasan should prove the sincerity of her administration to heal the wounds that have divided the country.

"I hope people take this in a good light that the President was just showing that she has continued to extend her hand of peace to her detractors for the sake of the country," said Defensor, who previously advocated Honasan's inclusion in the administration slate during its formation.

'Highly unusual'

At the hearing yesterday at the Makati Regional Trial Court, Honasan cried harassment following the filing of amended information by government prosecutors indicting him as the alleged leader of the failed Oakwood mutiny in July 2003.

HONASAN: No deal

The presiding judge, Oscar Pimentel, gave Honasan's camp 15 days or until May 19 to file their comments or opposition in court.

Honasan said the filing of additional information in the coup d'etat and rebellion charges against him was "highly unusual," with the elections only two weeks away.

He said this was a clear manifestation that Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, through the DOJ prosecutors panel, was doing everything to pin rebellion charges against him, other civilians and the Magdalo leaders.

This is pure and simple harassment. *Gusto lang nilang harangin ang pangangampanya ko dahil lumulusot ako sa mga* surveys (They just want to stop me from campaigning because surveys showed I am likely to win)," Honasan said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER.

Same affidavits

State Prosecutor Juan Nadera said the explicit naming of Honasan as the alleged leader was based on previous affidavits of witnesses who claimed the senator was active in the recruitment and meetings of the Magdalo group.

"We now allege that [Honasan] is the leader, director, recruiter and commander of the July 27, 2003 coup, unlike in previous information where he was simply linked to the mutiny," Nadera said. "We are basically dealing with the same affidavits of witnesses. We really needed to explicitly allege his leadership."

Part of the plan

Asked to react on Honasan's claims of harassment, Gonzalez said that the former rebel soldier had called him to ask "if he can sort of attack me as part of his campaign. It was part of his plan," the justice secretary told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Gonzalez said he told Honasan to make sure "his attacks were well-founded."

Gonzalez added that he relayed Honasan's plan to the President who said: "Don't allow it, don't allow him to attack you," the justice secretary said, quoting Ms Arroyo.

He also said Honasan's case was already out of his hands since the DOJ panel had filed the charges against the senatorial candidate.

The DOJ panel, in its April 18 resolution, said the witnesses against Honasan had attested that he was the "driving force" behind the recruitment and organization of a group of military officers to overthrow the government through force and violence. *With reports from Julie M. Aurelio and Leila B. Salaverria*

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ith bodyguards of Jon Jon Villanueva, is tested for powder burns by the ne Operatives. RAFFY LERMA

JON JON Villanueva, son of Jesus is Lord founder Bro. Eddie Villanueva and who is running for mayor in Bocaue, Bulacan, talks to media on Friday after an attempt on his life by alleged military at the JIL headquarters in Bocaue. RAFFY LERMA

FULL ALERT. A member of the Philippine National Police Scouts remains on full alert after a shooting incident in Bocaue, Bulacan. JOAN BONDOC

es Bro. Eddie son; not true, says Army

bush."
rding to their statements, ported that two Army per- in [civilian clothes] and on motorcycle came between nd 1:30 a.m. removing the of ... Villanueva. The JIL approached those men. an argument ensued," n told the INQUIRER. e were conflicting claims on fight started.

Villanueva camp said the opened fire first at around m., prompting them to re-

hot

nan said that a police escort d to Villanueva was report- witnesses to have fired the ot that killed Cpl. Leonardo 34, of the Army's 3rd In- Battalion.

n Palace

Villanueva, who is running for mayor here against reelectionist Mayor Serafin de la Cruz, was inside his campaign headquarters at the time, Rafanan said.

Lt. Col. Gerard Velez, 3rd IB commander, had a different account.

"At 8 p.m., I sent out a team of 12 soldiers to verify the presence of New People's Army [rebels] in the area. Two of my men rode on a motorcycle while the rest were in a Mitsubishi L-300 van. When the operation turned out to be negative, the troops headed back to camp," Velez said.

Counterinsurgency mission

He said that at 12:45 a.m., armed men in civilian clothes flagged them down in Barangay Bunlo.

"My troops did not stop but slowed down instead. Then, there were shots. My troops tried to fire back but the armed men entered a warehouse with JIL markings," he said.

"If that was an ambush, how come one of us was killed?" Velez asked.

He said Army soldiers were in the area for a "counterinsurgency mission" and not for election-related activities.

He said his group was just passing through the area and not carrying political posters or were removing any poster of Villanueva or Cibac.

"That was not my men's mission," Velez said.

He said his unit was "cooperating with the [police] in this investigation."

Unauthorized presence

Rafanan said that investigators considered the soldiers' presence and activities in the area as "not official" because they were not in uniform and could not show proof they were deputized by the Commission on Elections for any election-related task.

Supt. Buenaventura Viray, head of Task Force Bocaue, which is investigating the incident, said that initial investigation showed the soldiers were passing along the highway in front of Villanueva's headquarters when the shooting broke out.

The shooting followed complaints that posters of Villanueva and Cibac were being removed by men on a motorcycle.

Villanueva insisted that the soldiers were removing his and Cibac's posters but he said he did not see any poster of Bantay in the area.

Viray said one of those questioned by the police was SPO1 Renato Arbitulla, a police escort assigned to Villanueva.

'An AFP creation'

Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said the circumstances of the shooting incident showed a collusion between the Armed Forces and the Bantay party-list.

"Bayan Muna condemns the shooting incident this morning. This is clear proof that Palparan's party-list is an AFP creation and is thus disqualified from running," Casiño said.

PALPARAN

VILLANUEVA

"The Comelec should immediately act on this. We call on all voters to reject Palparan, Bantay and their agenda of death and terrorism," he added. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

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Thwarted

EDITORIAL

USING THE KIND OF TWISTED LOGIC PEOPLE have come to expect from the Commission on Elections under Chairman Benjamin Abalos, the poll body has stubbornly refused to disclose the names of nominees of the party-list groups seeking representation in Congress. "We don't want the party-list election to be personality-oriented," Abalos piously declared. "We vote not for the nominees, we vote for the party-list (group)."

The Comelec claimed the law was on its side when it issued a resolution formalizing that position. It cited the Party-List System Act (RA 7941) which says, "The names of party-list nominees shall not be shown on the certified list (of parties seeking representation under the system)."

But in a decision announced Thursday, the Supreme Court said the prohibition imposed by the law pertains only to the certified list and nothing more. "There is absolutely nothing in RA 7941 that prohibits the Comelec from disclosing or even publishing through mediums other than the certified list the names of party-list nominees," the Court said. On the other hand, the Court said refusal to disclose the names of party-list nominees would violate the people's right to information guaranteed by the Constitution as well as the policy of transparency mandated by the fundamental law.

The Court went on to stress that people need to know the nominees so that they can make an "informed judgment" when they vote. They cannot do this, it added, "in a system of blind voting," which is what the Comelec is "veritably advocating" with its resolution keeping under wraps the names of party-list nominees.

All these, of course, were what the various groups clamoring for disclosure had been saying all along: that to be informed about things that are of public interest is the people's constitutional right; that knowing the nominees is essential to making informed choices as to which party to vote for; that making informed choices necessarily requires knowing the nominees, if only to ensure that they have the capability to articulate the concerns of the marginalized sectors they seek to represent and propose measures that will advance their interests. And being lawyers, all the commissioners must have surely known that when a law comes in conflict with the Constitution, the fundamental law prevails. So why did they go ahead and pass such a fatally flawed resolution, which the Comelec didn't deem necessary in previous elections?

The groups, like Akbayan, Bantay Katarungan and Bantay Republic Act 7941, which have been pressuring the Comelec to release the list of nominees, have a believable theory: the list includes the names of people who have no rightful claim to represent the marginalized groups that are supposed to have put their names up as their nominees.

For instance, there is Dr. Arsenio Abalos, the Comelec chairman's brother and a medical doctor. He is one of the three nominees of Biyaheng Pinoy, a party of tricycle drivers. The law seeks to "enable Filipino citizens belonging to marginalized and under-represented sectors ... to become members of the House of Representatives." Does Dr. Abalos belong to this group? He may have taken a tricycle at one time or another, but does he drive one for a living?

There are also a handful of parties said to have been created by a shadowy agency under the Office of the President. The chief of this office was reported to have asked for funds to be used by these groups in a memo to President Macapagal-Arroyo. It would be easy enough to trace the connections to Malacañang, if any, of these parties' nominees if their names are made public. The Comelec resolution allowed these people to seek high office without revealing their identities.

But not anymore. The Supreme Court ordered that the names of all the nominees should be made known to the public immediately. And it effectively discouraged the Comelec from asking for a reconsideration by saying it should comply with that order even if it decides to file such a motion.

It's tempting to say after the Court decision that all's well that ends well. But there's a sadness and anger that linger because this dubious scheme to hoodwink the Filipinos into voting for people they don't even know was conceived by the very same body that is supposed to safeguard the people's right of suffrage and to help them exercise it wisely and responsibly.

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Commissions and omissions

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

IT IS TRAGIC THAT THE SUPERVISION OF Philippine elections is entrusted to the Commission on Elections, one of the most inept and corrupt institutions in our republican government. It should have been replaced long ago with a more reliable agency for the safeguarding of the ballot as the immaculate symbol of free and honest elections in this country.

This task was originally assigned to the Department of the Interior, which was not acceptable to the opposition parties, such as they were at the time, because of its natural inclination to favor the administration candidates. It was soon substituted by a statutory Commission on Elections, which was also unsatisfactory because it was subject to the control and even its abolition by the legislature that created it.

The solution that was generally welcomed was the conversion of the statutory body into a constitutional agency also to be called the Commission on Elections but with enough safeguards to its independence to guarantee the impartial enforcement of the election laws. That hope, however, was soon to be disillusioned by the political departments.

To be sure, there were periods during its checkered history when the Commission was filled with worthy members led by such exemplary chairmen as Gaudencio Garcia, Ramon Felipe Jr., Christian Monsod, and other persons of sterling quality. On the whole, however, the body has been cheapened with the inclusion of persons who have given it a bad name and lowered the people's confidence in it as the constitutional guardian of the right of suffrage.

People first began to distrust it during the campaign for the Parity Amendment when, supposedly upon orders of the Roxas administration and the craven complicity of the Supreme Court, it rejected the challenge of the Nacionalista Party that the proposed constitutional change had not been validly adopted with the required votes in both houses of Congress. The case of Mabanag v. Lopez Vito, 78 Phil. 1, has since been rejected by a more assertive Supreme Court, but in 1947 it allowed the adoption of parity rights for American citizens to the prejudice of our own national interests.

During martial law, the Commission on Elections under the heel of the dictator consistently held in favor of candidates rejected by the electorate but legitimized by the KBL. The haughty Imelda Marcos, for example, won dubiously in Manila against the popular minority candidates led by Ninoy Aquino. In Javier v. Comelec, 144 SCRA 194, the respondent ruled against the oppositionist Evelio through one of its members, who was a former law partner of the petitioner's opponent. The decision was reversed only after Edsa I by the reorganized Supreme Court, after Javier had already been murdered and the suspected mastermind had fled but was not hunted.

In recent times, some of its members have further discredited the Commission on Elections. The public was outraged when one commissioner escaped impeachment for believable and provable charges with the confabulation of the House of Representatives. Remember the "kissing lolo" who bussed a colleague without her consent and created a minor scandal in the already tarnished body? And there is, of course, the evasive ex-Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, who has reportedly admitted being the Garci in the notorious tape President Arroyo has described as her "lapse in judgment."

The Supreme Court has ordered the Comelec to recover the millions of pesos it has illegally paid for the useless election computerization machines now rotting at public expense. There is talk now of party-list registration and party-list nominations, as well as admission of nuisance candidates, for sale by the Commission. There is no penitence either for its purchase several years ago of brand-new luxury vehicles for the use of its privileged members.

Even in the relatively simple matter of illegal posters, the Commission on Elections has been shamefully inefficient. The election laws provide that political posters may be pasted only in areas designated by it but thousands of such poster are now all over Metro Manila—and possibly also in other centers of population throughout the land—without the consent or punishment of the Commission on Elections.

The Genuine Opposition is already complaining against the alleged plot of the Commission on Elections and the administration to cheat in the coming elections as they did in 2004, again with the usual Garci tactics employed against FPJ. The past elections and possibly the coming elections too will show that the Commission on Elections should be abolished as the principal cause of the death of democracy in this country. The trouble is that it appears to be inextinguishable like wild grass, political dynasties, and the pork barrel.

The Brawner Doctrine

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

BY A VOTE OF TWO TO ONE, THE COMelec's Special First Division has ruled that Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo is not a Filipino citizen and, therefore, must step down as mayor. This in connection with a "quo warranto" case filed in 2004 (which questioned Robredo's right to serve as mayor, on the ground that he is not a Filipino). Another case, filed last month by his election opponent, asks for his disqualification as a candidate, also on the same ground. The case has landed in the same division, so the decision on it is almost a foregone conclusion.

As stated in my column of April 14, 2007, Robredo is finishing his fifth term as mayor of Naga, and is running for his sixth. He is undoubtedly one of the best, if not the best, mayor the Philippines has had—judging from the awards—national and international—heaped on him and the city of Naga under his stewardship. But that is not the point of this column. The point is his Filipino citizenship, which has been questioned from the time he entered the political arena 15 years ago. The Comelec has resolved the question three times in his favor—before this latest decision.

Why do we say that Robredo is a Filipino citizen? Let us count the ways: his birth certificate states that he is a Filipino citizen and that his parents are both Filipino citizens; his father's birth certificate states that he (father) is a Filipino citizen. His grandfather's death certificate states that he (grandfather) is a Filipino citizen. Jesse and his father carry Philippine passports. Since these are government official documents, the presumption must be that Robredo is indeed a Filipino. Moreover, Robredo has voted in Philippine elections ever since he reached the age of majority—long before he entered politics. And if it makes any difference, he never studied in a Chinese school, doesn't speak Chinese, and has never even visited China. He was allowed to run five times, petitions for his disqualification having been denied all along. Except this time around.

Obviously, these proofs of citizenship are not enough for the Special First Division or, more accurately, for Commissioners Romeo Brawner and Nicodemo Ferrer. The third and presiding commissioner, Resurreccion Borra, dissented—naturally enough, since he penned some of the previous Comelec decisions ruling Robredo as Filipino indeed, and natural-born at that.

Why is Robredo not a Filipino? Because, says ponente Brawner, Robredo failed to prove that his grandfather, Lim Teng, who came to the Philippines in 1896, or 111 years ago, became a Filipino citizen.

Let's hear it from Brawner: "There is no evidence on record which would show that the Lim Teng who allegedly arrived in the Philippines from China ... is the same person as "Juan Robredo," the paternal grandfather of respondent Jesse Robredo. Respondent's (Robredo's) contention that Lim Teng was christened as Juan Lim Robredo cannot be taken at face value, without any supporting evidence to that effect.... Thus, assuming arguendo that a certain Lim Teng arrived in the Philippines in 1896, Juan Robredo still cannot claim from the beneficiary provisions of the Philippine Bill of 1902 without presenting adequate proof that they are truly one and the same person."

Hold on there. If, as Brawner says, there is no evidence that Lim Teng and Juan Lim Robredo (Filipino per his death certificate) are one and the same, then there should be no problem to start with. Because it is Juan Lim Robredo who is Jesse's grandfather, and no one is questioning Juan Lim Robredo's citizenship, unless he were originally Lim Teng!

Brawner goes on: "Assuming ... for the sake of argument, that Lim Teng is the same as Juan Robredo, respondent would still remain to be a Chinese citizen as Lim Teng himself remained a Chinese citizen." Why? Because, Brawner says, the Philippine Bill of 1902 requires that to be a citizen of the Philippines, the subject must not only be an inhabitant of the Philippine islands on the 12th day of April, but must also continue to reside therein—and the only thing established about Lim Teng is his arrival in the country in 1896. So Lim Teng cannot be considered a Filipino citizen; neither can Jesse.

Gee whiz. The man had five children, including Jesse's father (born in 1923) and was buried in the Philippines in 1934 or thereabouts. Who fathered those children and supported them—a ghost? For Brawner, the scenario must have been that Lim Teng left the Philippines, and then came back just to die.

There's more from Brawner: since Jesse's mother was a natural-born Filipina, he could have elected Filipino citizenship at 21, but didn't. So, he can't be a Filipino citizen. Brawner ignores all the acts of implied election by Jesse (according to a Supreme Court decision—exercising the right of suffrage and participation in election exercises is a positive act of election of Philippine citizenship—the so-called "doctrine of implied election").

But I save the best of Brawner's for the last. He insists that a person claiming to be a citizen of the Philippines has the burden of proving it—and cites the Supreme Court decision in the FPJ citizenship case. That is not how I read that decision of the high court; in fact, I think it says the opposite. But just on general principle, if someone accuses Brawner of not being a Filipino, is Brawner saying that the burden of proof is on himself, rather than on the accuser? In other words, a man is presumed guilty unless he can prove his innocence.

The gospel according to Brawner.

Timing

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS EXPECTED IN EVERY ELECTION SEASON, political violence has escalated. This will go on as long as political expenses remain enormously high and political dynasties persist. But the recent wave of unexplained disappearances and killings of a number of leftist people is disturbing in many more ways. For one thing, the pattern seems too regular and contrived, so that one can almost see the effort to discredit the administration in all those incidents. Then, too, some media are quick to blame the military for the incidents, even though there seems to be no shred of evidence to back up their charges. It is most difficult to imagine the mainstream military doing all the killings; for all the blame it's now getting, that argument about a "culture of impunity" doesn't wash. It's possible that behind these episodes are some breakaway military group that the mainstream cannot control; or some leftist militants who think nothing of sacrificing their own just to bring down this government.

* * *

With the elections only nine days away, timing is the name of the game. Yesterday, for instance, the Black & White Movement came out with a full-page ad decrying, among other things, that the total amount of foreign direct investments (FDI) made in the Philippines from 2001-2006 was the lowest among six countries in the Asean: $7.12 billion for RP compared with Vietnam's $12.14 billion, Indonesia's $14.32 billion, Thailand's $34.35 billion, etc. But yesterday, too, President Macapagal-Arroyo triumphantly announced that Texas Instruments (TI), the world's biggest maker of mobile phone chips, is setting up a $1-billion plant at Clark Special Economic Zone. This will initially employ 3,000 people, a third of them engineers. GMA stressed that RP won this investment, TI's biggest in Asia-Pacific in recent years, after a "fierce competition." Doubtless, the Palace announcement was timed to gain more votes for the administration coalition in the Dagupan-Lucena corridor where 60 percent of the country's total votes are concentrated.

* * *

The "warrant of garnishment" issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue to the 34 commercial banks where Makati City's funds are deposited is being questioned because of its "timing." The order effectively freezes the city's operational funds, but the opposition suspects this was meant to cut its financial lifeline in the last, crucial week of the campaign, inasmuch as Mayor Jejomar Binay, not former President Estrada, is widely rumored to be the major financier of the opposition. But Makati City revenue officer Roberto Baquiran (expectedly) denies this allegation, stressing that his order stems from the failure of the city government to remit to the BIR P1.1 billion in withholding taxes already collected from its 8,000 employees from 1999 to 2002. Binay claims that Makati has been negotiating with the BIR to settle its tax obligation, and that the latter never told him that his settlement request had been rejected.

The timing of the warrant of garnishment indeed raises suspicions, but it also poses questions that Binay has to answer to his constituents, who he says would now miss their mid-year bonus. How come one of the richest city governments has failed all these years to remit to the BIR P1.1 billion in withholding taxes? Where did the money go? Was it used to fund opposition rallies following the ouster of President Joseph Estrada and the current election campaign?

* * *

Also of questionable timing was the recent Comelec resolution disqualifying Mayor Jesse Robredo, a Magsaysay awardee for governance, from the mayoral race in Naga City, on the allegation that he is a Chinese citizen. Robredo has served as mayor for a total of 16 years and is conceded to be among the best local executives. He has run in six elections, all of which he won. Five disqualification cases filed earlier against him were decided in his favor, some of them by the Comelec en banc. Why that resolution now?

* * *

Ernie Santiago, executive director of Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc., is ecstatic over RP's recent coup with TI. He declared, "We have broken the China myth." He was referring to the fact that China has been cornering the lion's share of foreign investments from the West in recent years. The Philippines has succeeded in getting only a minuscule share of the investments made in the region, owing largely to perceptions of political instability. But lately, many foreign investment bankers, including my Tokyo-based son-in-law, note that the country is again on the investors' radar screen. It behooves us all to strengthen this perception by pulling together and keeping faith with our own capacities, instead of constantly sowing discord and despair, such as what some citizens' groups are doing.

* * *

Asked why his firm chose Clark, TI senior vice president Kevin Ritchie pointed to the availability and quality of our labor force, among many reasons. Central to this decision was the impressive performance record of TI-Baguio, which has been in operation over the past 28 years. Cecile Alvarez and I had occasion a few years ago to interview its president and managing director Norberto "Bing" Viera, and he was all praises for his people. He recalled their incredible show of grit and resolve to overcome nightmarish problems caused by the big Baguio earthquake, such as power and water interruptions, so that they could meet shipment deadlines. Viera pointed out that TI-Baguio's post-earthquake performance won the admiration of facilities all around the world. Congratulations to TI.

* * *

Tune in tomorrow at 9:15 p.m. to the interesting dzRH interview Cecile and I had with Namfrel veteran Damaso Magbual. Stressing that Namfrel is resolved to improve on its 2004 performance, Magbual spells out the seven steps involved from the time the votes are cast to the proclamation of the winners and analyzes where cheating is likely to occur.

Brave, defiant searchers

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HERE'S THE SECOND PART OF THE VALEDICTORY speech of Mikaela Irene Fudolig, who at just 16 years old, already has a degree in BS Physics, summa cum laude from the University of the Philippines, Diliman. She was chosen valedictorian of her class and her speech, "Take Not the Road Less Traveled," was not just a rousing call to service, but proved to be so inspiring it has been making the rounds of the Internet since.

In the speech, Mikaela said she was "putting my money where my mouth is" and was placing herself in the service of the university, offering to teach and thus "share knowledge, and perhaps to be an example to new UP students in thinking and striving beyond the limits of the possible." A TV news report on Mikaela's speech mentioned that because of her youth, this UP summa cum laude would still need to get a special work permit from the Department of Labor. They might as well hang out a sign for Mikaela and her ilk: "Welcome to the real world!"

The rest of Mikaela's speech follows. May you find inspiration and hope from it.

* * *

WE have been warned time and again. Our new world that they call "adulthood" is one that's full of compromises, where success is determined more by the ability to belong than by the ability to think, where it is much easier to do as everyone else does. Daily we are bombarded with so much news of despair about the state of our nation, and the apparent, perverse sense of satisfaction our politicians get from vilifying our state of affairs. It is fashionable to migrate to other countries to work in deceptively high-paying jobs like nursing and teaching, forgetting that even at their favored work destinations, nurses and teachers are some of the lowest paid professionals. The lure of high and immediate monetary benefits in some low-end outsourcing jobs has drawn even some of the brightest UP students away from both industry and university teaching to which they would have been better suited.

Like the sidewalks and pavement, these paths are the easiest to take.

But, like the sidewalks and pavement, these paths take longer to traverse, just as individual successes do not always make for national progress. The unceasing critic could get elected, but not get the job done. The immigrant could get his visa, but disappear from our brainpower pool. The highly paid employee would be underutilized for his skills, and pine to get the job he truly wants, but is now out of his reach. And the country, and we, are poorer because of these.

Today, the nation needs brave, defiant pioneers to reverse our nation's slide to despair. Today, we must call upon the spirit that beats the tracks. Today, we must present an alternative way of doing things.

* * *

DO not just take courage, for courage is not enough. Instead, be **brave**! It will take bravery to go against popular wisdom, against the clichéd expectations of family and friends. It will take bravery to gamble your future by staying in the country and try to make a prosperous life here. It might help if for a start, we try to see why our Korean friends are flocking to our country. Why, as many of us line up for immigrant visas in various embassies, they get themselves naturalized and settle here. Do they know something we don't?

Do *not* just be strong in your convictions, for strength is not enough. Instead, **defy** the pressure to lead a comfortable, but middling life. Let us lead this country from the despair of mediocrity.

Let us not seek to do well, but strive to excel in everything that we do. This, so others will see us as a nation of brains of the highest quality, not just of brawn that could be had for cheap.

Take **not** the road less traveled. Rather, make new roads, **blaze** new trails, **find** new routes to your dreams. Unlike the track-beaters in campus who see where they're going, we may not know how far we can go. But if we are brave, defiant searchers of excellence, we will go far. Explore possibilities that others may get a similar chance. I have tried it myself. And I'm speaking to you now.

But talk is cheap, they say. And so I put my money where my mouth is. Today, I place myself in the service of the University, if it will have me. I would like to teach, to share knowledge, and perhaps to be an example to new UP students in thinking and striving beyond the limits of the possible. This may only be a small disturbance in the grass. But I hope you'll come with me, and trample a new path.

* * *

THIS last bit is not in the least bit inspiring or filled with such high-flown sentiments as Mikaela's speech.

When you see signs in coffee shops, restaurants or other establishments offering "free Wi-Fi service," don't believe them. What the signs really mean is that a customer can avail of Wi-Fi (or wireless Internet service) but only in exchange for a certain amount of food, beverage or goods, and only for a limited period. None of which, by the way, the signs or the counter people will tell you when you avail of their "free" Wi-Fi.

I wrote and sent yesterday's column in the Figaro Coffee outlet in Tagaytay. When I inquired about availing of Wi-Fi service, the counter girl said I would need to buy P200 worth of coffee or whatever for access. I ended up buying an iced cappuccino and carrot cake for a slip of paper with a user name and password just so I could surf the Net, write and send my column. But when I was ready to send my column, my laptop told me that I had exceeded the "time limit," which no one saw fit to tell me about. To cut the story short, I had to buy two more mini-cakes just so I could send my column.

Needless to say, I'm not patronizing Figaro's Tagaytay again, and when I see a "free Wi-Fi" sign again, I'll take it with the proverbial grain of salt.

My beloved

YOUNG BLOOD

Mary Concepcion Sison

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

AS I WRITE, MY BELOVED SLEEPS SOUNDLY BESIDE ME in bed, snoring softly. I dare not move lest he wake up and see me just staring at him. I confess that this is my latest addiction: just gazing at his well-sculpted face, infinitely thankful to heaven for this gift. And that's exactly what he is, a gift, which I never really asked for but whom God gave to me at a time in my life when "the rubber met the road."

I've been in Canada for three months now. My sole purpose was to visit my mom who was diagnosed with cancer of the brain last October 2006. She underwent radiation therapy even as dozens of kinfolk joined us in prayer as we fought the good fight of faith. Everything that happened was a "touching heaven and changing earth" experience for us. Time froze and our heartbeats were suspended as we waited for the result of her final CT scan. Did the radiation work? If not, a much more delicate brain surgery would be considered but the risks were great. My mom was 62 and she had begged not to be operated on since she had had her fill of seven operations.

But our God is good. He granted her a miracle. The oncologist after looking at the results of her latest CT scan said: "It was fabulous Perla, absolutely nothing was seen in your brain anymore." That was the one piece of good news our family needed to be able to breathe freely again.

God is also a God of wonders. As if one miracle wasn't enough, He gave me him—an assignment, a riddle, an answer to some of life's most troubling questions. God gave him to me at a time when I wasn't even sure I was ready for such a commitment. But the commitment resounded more like a call, a summons. And the call became a religion.

Day in and day out, he was almost always in my arms. I fed him, took care of him, and loved him as my own. In turn, he taught me how to "love completely without complete understanding."

He is my eldest sister's son, Jes. For more than a month now, I've been taking care of him. It's either her sickness, her older son's sickness or household chores that keeps her from being able to look after three-month old Jes, though it breaks her maternal heart to ask me to serve as surrogate mother for a while.

At first, I wasn't sure if I could handle him and how I would do it. But since there was no one else around, I stayed and took up the challenge.

At age 29, I know very little about motherhood, so there was much silent resistance inside when it was first suggested. Back in the Philippines, I had psyched myself up for a battle with cancer and to rescue from its deadly snare, but I wasn't prepared for Jes. Surprisingly, however, we were able to make a good team. As I tried to learn the basics of motherhood, he somehow showed me how much of a baby I am especially with regard to my being a Christian.

When he wakes up and screams for milk earlier than his schedule (the doctor says babies shouldn't be overfed and should have an interval of two to three hour between feedings), I realize my own impatience when it comes to asking God about the things I want and that having them prematurely would really do me no good. When he keeps silent and doesn't want to be disturbed in his sleep even when he has already soiled his diaper, I think of God shaking His head in displeasure as He sees us enduring filth so we can continue to enjoy our small pleasures (and we wouldn't even cry out to Him to cleanse us). When he cries so hard for anything like milk or because of gas pain or a wet diaper (and he does it all the time), I feel so ashamed for being such a whiner, even if I know that He will always be there to pick me up.

Jes came at a time when "the rubber met the road" for me: My mother is recovering from cancer, I am jobless and homesick in Canada, and I'm 29 and almost in panic since my personal goals don't seem to be anywhere within my reach. But I believe that God used him to make me come to my senses and to tell me to let Jesus take the wheel again.

I thank God for my beloved who continues to sleep soundly, still snoring softly. I thank God for simply teaching me the gospel according to Jes.

Mary Concepcion Sison, 29, is a graduate of the University of Philippines in Diliman with an AB in psychology.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Will Olmert survive?

WORLD VIEW

Shlomo Avineri

AFTER ISRAEL'S INABILITY LAST SUMMER TO achieve a conclusive victory over Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, public pressure forced Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government to appoint a commission to examine the causes of this surprising failure. How could a small militia, numbering less than a few thousand combatants, survive the onslaught of the Middle East's most formidable military machine?

The commission, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Eliyahu Winograd, has just published its interim report. Its criticism of Olmert, Defense Minister Amir Peretz and Chief of Staff Dan Halutz—set forth in a detailed and meticulous 117-page assessment—is harsh, but not surprising. The Winograd Commission articulated what most Israelis already think: Olmert and Peretz lacked the military, security, and policy experience to confront a terrorist organization that raided Israeli territory, killed a number of soldiers and kidnapped two; and then launched thousands of rockets on civilian targets for over a month.

Indeed, the inexperience of the prime minister and the defense minister are unprecedented in Israel's history. Olmert, who stepped into Ariel Sharon's shoes as leader of the new Kadima Party, was considered a competent but lackluster parliamentarian—and later mayor of Jerusalem—who was known more for his polemical style than for his political stature or gravitas.

For most Israelis, even those who voted for Olmert as the bearer of Sharon's legacy after the Gaza disengagement, he thus remained the accidental prime minister. Likewise, Peretz, a rabble-rousing but effective trade unionist, surprised all when he won the Labor Party's leadership primary and then chose the defense portfolio over the treasury.

To many, the duo of Olmert and Peretz seemed to invite trouble. Precisely because Israelis are aware of the constant security threat facing their country, they have always believed that their leaders should be able not only to lead Israel in war but also to ask the military tough questions when diplomacy may fail.

When such a moment arrived, totally out of the blue (or so it seemed) with Hezbollah's raid on July 12, 2006, Israel's two top politicians were completely out of their depth, stumbling into a war for which neither they nor the Israeli Army were prepared. The military was led—for the first time in its history—by an Air Force general, Dan Halutz, who believed that everything could be solved by air power, creating a combustible combination of civilian ignorance and military arrogance.

In measured but devastating prose, the Winograd Commission gives failing marks to all three leaders. Olmert decided to go into battle recklessly and unaware of the consequences. Peretz was unable to gauge the strategic implications of his decisions. And Halutz failed to present the civilian leadership with the full panoply of military options at the army's disposal.

Halutz already resigned a few months ago. But both Olmert and Peretz have declared that, despite the Commission's conclusions, they would not quit: instead, they have vowed to implement the report's many far-reaching substantive recommendations about policy, strategy and decision-making processes.

Will Olmert and Peretz be able to stay on? Their coalition government enjoys a comfortable parliamentary majority; and the political arithmetic does not imply a viable parliamentary alternative. But public opinion—volatile and angry—calls for both to resign: a public-opinion poll, conducted after the Commission published its report, indicated that only 14 percent of Israelis believe that Olmert should keep his job, while less than 11 percent support Peretz.

Later this week, demonstrations calling for the government's resignation are planned, and it will become obviously more difficult for the government to continue to function. There are already rumors about a palace coup within Kadima, aimed at replacing Olmert with either the deputy prime minister, the veteran Shimon Peres, or the popular foreign minister, Tzipi Livni. But it does not appear that Olmert will allow himself to be pushed out.

In fact, Olmert's weak and discredited government may yet survive. If the government were to fall and new elections held, there are strong indications that the winner might be Binyamin Netanyahu, of the right-wing Likud, which was decimated in the 2006 elections, but is now patiently waiting in the wings. Many who want Olmert to go would still not welcome a Netanyahu comeback, which may also explain what appears to be an indirect endorsement of Olmert by the United States.

Only a strong Israeli government can make the painful decisions necessary for negotiations with the Palestinians to succeed. As a result, the prospects for meaningful continuation of Israeli-Palestinian talks look even dimmer than they did before. Indeed, the real loser of the 2006 Lebanon war was neither Israel nor Hezbollah. It was—at least for the time being—the peace process.

Project Syndicate

Shlomo Avineri is professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University and a former director general of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

IN THE NEWS

Mstislav Rostropovich

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Party-list system under siege, needs reform

AS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL PARTY-LIST representatives elected in 1998 and having seen the party-list system evolve over the last nine years, I support former Comelec chair Christian Monsod's proposal for a reform of the party-list system. Partido ng Manggagawa will move for amendments to the party-list law.

Over the past nine years the party-list law has indeed been bastardized, but now there is a clear and present danger that it will be sabotaged. Embedded in the 93 party-list groups currently accredited are fake groups and Malacañang fronts. The Commission on Elections has refused to divulge the list of nominees of these party lists, thus making it difficult to expose the fakes and the fronts. There are now first-hand reports of party-list registrations up for sale. And militant party-lists are being harassed at the grassroots level.

Even at the start of the party-list system, there were already fake groups. Thus in the 1998 campaign, we called for "Party list *ay para sa tao di para sa trapo*." But it has gone from bad to worse over the years as the *trapos* have seen that the party-list system provides a key for a back-door entry to Congress and that it is more cost-effective than a campaign for district-level congressional seat.

Still, despite its flaws, the system has proved itself by allowing real representatives of the marginalized—among them workers' and peasants'—to enter the elite-dominated Congress. And the party-list representatives have proved themselves to be the conscience of Congress by pushing for radical legislation embodying the demands of the workers, peasants and the poor, like the P125-wage hike.

We propose the following reforms to strengthen the party-list system:

1. A massive public information drive spearheaded by the Comelec, in coordination with people's organizations, to promote among voters a higher level of awareness and understanding of the party-list system.

2. The incorporation into the party-list law of the Supreme Court jurisprudence in the Ang Bagong Bayani OFW vs. Comelec case, which provided an 8-point guideline for weeding out fake groups.

3. Mandatory publication by the Comelec of the list of party-list nominees.

4. Lowering of the 2-percent threshold and the pro-rata distribution of the party-list seats to ensure that all of the reserved 20 percent of House seats will be filled up by representatives of the marginalized.

—REP. RENATO MAGTUBO,
Partido ng Manggagawa,
Room 310 South Wing,
House of Representatives,
Quezon City

Best effort to give public better Naia

WE READ IN THE APRIL 8 ISSUE OF the INQUIRER the article on the "Kiddie Travelers Lounge" of the Manila Domestic Terminal.

We thank the INQUIRER for the very positive write-up. We are glad that our efforts to bring new life to the old airport terminal are now being noticed. Articles like these serve as a driving force for us to strive for better ways to upgrade the quality of service in all Naia terminals. Through the INQUIRER's help, we are confident that we will be able to achieve all the plans we have for the terminal, for the welfare of our passengers.

We would like to assure one and all that we will continue to do our best to give the public a better Naia.

—ALFONSO G. CUSI,
general manager,
Manila International Airport Authority,
MIAA Administration Bldg.,
MIA Road, Pasay City

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Let the stars stay away from politics

THESE COMING ELECTIONS, FILIPINOS should not vote for actors and actresses. Show-biz celebrities are not the kind of persons who care for the general welfare and interest of the masses. Like the traditional politicians, they are easily tempted to take advantage of their office, commit corruption and enrich themselves.

Leo Martinez, director general of the Film Academy of the Philippines, is right in saying that actors and actresses should focus on their occupation as entertainers and should not join politics to run for senator, congressman, governor, mayor, etc., for they are unfit to serve as such.

The fact is, many actors and actresses who have turned politicians still continue to perform in the movies and television shows. Perhaps, they want the public to believe that they can work as an actor/actress and politician at the same time.

There are qualified persons who can better serve their constituents, who understand the functions and responsibilities of the political positions they're running for, but the people do not elect them. It is time that we, the voters, elected the right persons to our government. When we make our choices in the coming elections, we should let common sense, not *bakya* mentality, prevail; we should vote for honest and sincere candidates who can lead us as true public servants.

The Filipino people must change and learn to not be easily deceived into electing actors and actresses. Let actors and actresses stick to the profession God has assigned them to. They should not play the dual role of an actor and politician. They should give people who are best qualified the chance to serve as senator, congressman, governor, mayor, etc.

—NANCY MANGAHAS MANGUBAT,
Bongao, Tawi-Tawi

Nantes not behind Mallari shooting

THIS RELATES TO SEVERAL INQUIRER reports directly linking Rep. Rafael P. Nantes as the mastermind of the April 19 shooting of Delfin Mallari Jr., an INQUIRER correspondent, and Johnny Glorioso, a dzMM reporter, by repeatedly quoting Mallari's allegation against him. There is, we believe, a violation of journalistic ethics here.

For the record, the Philippine National Police in Lucena City is still conducting its investigation of the incident and it is yet to release its findings. The PNP, in its investigation, is not considering Nantes as a suspect. There is no basis for dragging his name into the case.

To put matters in proper perspective, Nantes is a peaceful, non-violent and God-fearing individual who has never been linked to any violent acts. He is well-loved by his constituents for bringing unprecedented development in the first district of Quezon province, for fighting against corruption, the proliferation of illegal drugs and other illegal activities, and for staunchly protecting the environment.

Immediately upon hearing about the incident, Nantes rushed to the hospital where Mallari was brought to determine his safety and offer his help in any way whatsoever. Nantes also called on the PNP to immediately investigate the incident in order to identify the perpetrators of the attack and find out the motive behind it. He even committed to cooperate in the investigation.

Nantes is running for governor of Quezon. He has denounced any and all forms of violence and has called upon the electorate to be responsible and to vote wisely in the coming elections. He has also refused to engage in dirty politics, including the use of black propaganda and intimidation, to which he is being subjected right now.

We feel that the INQUIRER accounts about the incident have besmirched the reputation of Nantes and cast a malignant shadow over his otherwise untarnished name and image. It appears that the INQUIRER is being used as a black propaganda tool against Nantes.

—ANTONIOUS G. COLLADO,
Altamira Cas Alaba Collado Law Offices,
19/F Strata 100 Bldg.,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

A review of the INQUIRER reports on the Mallari slay attempt (nine stories as of May 1) would show that Nantes' vehement denial of Mallari's allegation was repeatedly mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs. Other stories also quoted police officials who essentially said the police had no evidence to link Nantes to the shooting and that they were being careful not to jump to conclusions. These stories constitute our best efforts to adhere to journalistic ethics.

—INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

GSIS funds need looking into

I RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THAT ONE of the INQUIRER's investigative journalists or columnists look into the current financial condition of the Government Service Insurance System. I am compelled to seek the INQUIRER's assistance because we, old-age pensioners in Cebu, are so concerned about our long-delayed monthly pensions.

According to the GSIS, it implemented the eCard system effective January 2007. Most of my co-retirees have not received their pensions for at least three months now, as well as their 13th-month pay and the survivorship benefits, which is provided for under Sec. 16 of PD 1146.

I myself have written President Macapagal-Arroyo. I have yet to receive a reply.

I am very worried. Since my retirement five years ago, I always received my pension checks on time—until this year. And this is an election year and I am afraid that some evil minds helped by dirty fingers might be dipping their hands into the GSIS coffers for election funds.

Our meager monthly pensions are solely used to buy maintenance medicines and food supplements. Thus we try to invigorate our frail body and extend our lives a little longer.

I will highly appreciate it if the INQUIRER will take up the cudgels for us, old-age pensioners whose lives are already in the sunset years.

—DOMINICO C. MONEVA,
704-D Bulacao, Pardo,
Cebu City 6000

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PEACE FRIENDS
Members of the Peace Corps Volunteers join in prayer during Mass in Legazpi City to honor Julia Campbell, a Peace Corps volunteer who was killed during a visit to the mountains of Banaue. Julia lived in Legazpi City where she taught English and helped build several projects for the poor.
NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Palace sends team for project list in Dato's district

LIBMANAN, CAMARINES SUR—The Palace had shown keen interest in this town, the residence of President Macapagal Arroyo's son, Dato Arroyo, who is running for congressman, when, for the first time in its history, the parish was consulted on the needs of the town's constituents.

Mgsr. Manuel Ricafort, parish priest of St. James Church here, told the INQUIRER that members of the Presidential Management Staff and undersecretaries came to visit him two weeks ago and asked him what the Palace could do to help the town of Libmanan.

"You ask me what are the needs of our town, I'll tell you that poverty is all around," Ricafort recalls telling the group.

The list includes upgrading the hospital, providing for tertiary education and improving the irrigation system "which always breaks down and whose cost of operations is very high the farmers could hardly pay irrigation fees," he said.

The monsignor said he asked one of the priests of the prelature of Libmanan to package into a proposal the list submitted to the Palace staff.

The prelature has jurisdiction over parishes in the 10-town first district of Camarines Sur, where Dato threw his hat in the congressional race against a homegrown local politician and third-term Mayor Sabas Mabulo of San Fernando town.

Ricafort explained that a prelature is a church unit lower than a diocese and poorer than the latter. It gets subsidy from the archdiocese.

In another part of the country, another Arroyo, this time the sister of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, is campaigning for her party-list group.

Marilou Arroyo, the sister of the first gentleman, is campaigning for the Kasanga party-list group of which she is a member.

In a recent visit of the Team Unity senatorial candidates to Bacolod City, the Manila-based Marilou joined the administration's sorties and was even introduced to Negros Occidental barangay captains by a village chief as a "congresswoman."

Marilou, however, clarified on Wednesday that the members of Kasanga have yet to hold a convention to choose their nominees to represent the group in the House of Representatives. *Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon and Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

Harassment of Magsaysay awardee mayor seen

NAGA CITY—THIS CITY'S MAYOR is facing disqualification by the Commission on Elections over a nine-year citizenship issue that his rival, a candidate of President Macapagal-Arroyo, is now using to win.

Mayor Jesse Robredo, recipient of the 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service, received an order from the Comelec requiring him to answer a petition for disqualification filed by Jojo Villafuerte, a candidate for mayor of the Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi), a party run by tough Arroyo ally Rep. Luis Villafuerte and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

The Comelec issued a quo warranto order to Robredo. Judge Junet Ayo, of this city's regional trial court, said the quo warranto order required Robredo to justify his hold on office.

Deadline

Robredo said he has to act on the order in five days or his vice mayor would take over the position.

He said his lawyers are to file a motion for reconsideration at the Comelec.

The Liberal Party, in a statement, condemned the Comelec order as an act of politically motivated harassment against Robredo, who left the ruling Lakas-NUCD to join the opposition LP.

"I join the residents of Naga City in urging the Comelec en banc to do right and overturn this highly questionable decision," said Sen. Mar Roxas, executive vice president of LP.

"We in the Liberal Party stand firmly behind Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo and question the decision of the Comelec to unseat him due to issues regarding his citizenship," said Roxas' statement.

"This is clearly a form of harassment for partisan political purposes."

Robredo said Commissioner Romeo Brawner had advance information on the voting of the Comelec's first division.

Confidence

"It is still a long way to go and we will file for a motion for reconsideration," Robredo said.

Robredo, born to a father of pure Chinese descent and a Filipina mother, is running for reelection against Jojo Villafuerte, nephew of Representative Villafuerte and a Kampi candidate. *Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

'Dagdag-bawas' operators start engine for fraud in Pangasinan

DAGUPAN CITY—LINGAYEN-DAGUPAN ARCHbishop Oscar Cruz warned of chaos in Pangasinan if some candidates in the May 14 elections resort to cheating.

Cruz said he had received reports that at least two teachers in the province were offered between P50,000 and P100,000 to undertake "dagdag-bawas" (vote padding and shaving) in favor of certain candidates.

"I am worried that bad things will happen if there will be massive cheating in the elections," he said.

He said the incident where teachers were offered money "could be happening everywhere in Pangasinan."

Gov. Victor Agbayani said reports reaching his office showed that some teachers were being harassed or bribed to cheat for some candidates in the elections.

"As the governor, I call on my province mates to protect their votes. I also call on the teachers not to allow themselves to be used by unscrupulous persons to destroy democracy," Agbayani told reporters.

"The life of democracy is the elections when the citizens have the right and freedom to select their leaders. We should protect that right because if citizens are not allowed to select their leaders, democracy is destroyed. We must therefore be faithful to our duty so that the will of the people would prevail," he said.

A letter by a teacher to a mayoral candidate in Bugallon town said she was approached by a barangay captain offering her P100,000 for her help in a "ballot substitution" operation in favor of another mayoral candidate and a gubernatorial bet.

The teacher said she rejected the offer and asked the Commission on Elections, the police and other agencies to investigate the village official.

Cruz said the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) has taken measures to prevent massive poll fraud and violence in Pangasinan.

He said the PPCRV would provide voters' assistance in every precinct through a trained staff that will conduct poll watching and documentation of any fraudulent activities on May 14.

All parishes in the province will have PPCRV desks manned by a lawyer each. The desks will conduct a parallel count at the precinct level and its results will be sent immediately to the provincial PPCRV center at the St. John's Cathedral here, Cruz said.

The local campaign in Pangasinan was marred by the killing recently of San Carlos Mayor Julian Resuello, whose murder is unsolved and was likely to remain so, according to critics of the Philippine National Police.

But on Thursday, PNP Director General Oscar Calderon presented to reporters one of the suspects in the killing of Resuello and his security aide Eulogio Martinez and said police are now on the hunt for the murder's mastermind. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Angara proposes canal to link Zambo with Lanao

TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL CANDIdate Edgardo J. Angara has proposed the construction of a Panama Canal-type bypass from Zamboanga del Norte to Lanao del Sur to fast-track the movement of vital goods from Mindanao to the Visayas and Metro Manila and boost Mindanao's commercial and trade links with the rest of the country.

Angara, in a press statement, said the construction of the canal-cum-shipping lane was deemed feasible and commercially viable by a study which he commissioned during his term as agriculture secretary under then President Joseph Estrada in 1999.

Angara said shipping time would be cut by a day once the canal, which shall link Pangil Bay with Yllana Bay, is constructed across Mindanao's land mass.

"Fish catch from Cotabato or Sulu, seaweed from the ARMM, meat or poultry from these areas would save a day of travel if brought to Cebu or Metro Manila. Freight cost will be lower, producers will earn more, the risk of spoilage will be minimized," said Angara, in a news conference in Zamboanga City.

"Even the movement of goods within the Mindanao region will be hastened with the canal," Angara added.

He said that the speedy movement of goods and cargo within the region and outside of it will not be the only big benefit to be reaped by the region with the construction of the Canal.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Cagayan Valley Medical Center
Regional Tertiary, Teaching and Training Hospital
Carig, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan
Tel. Nos. 844-1410 or 1810

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Delivery of One unit 625KVA/500KW Generator set and Rehabilitation of one unit 313KVA, 3 Phase PERKINS Brand and one unit PABX system with installation

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
Bidding for the delivery of one unit 625 KVA/500KW, 0.8 Power Factor, 240V, 3 Phase, 60Hz with control measurements and accessories, open type, Brand New US, Made in US and rehabilitation of one unit 313 KVA Generator Set, 3 phase perkins brand	6,000,000.00
Bidding of one unit PABX system with 8 digital trunk line ports, 115 local ports, 5 digital local ports and expandable to 400 ports both digital and analog combined	2,000,000.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	GENERATOR SET AND PABX
Issuance of Bid Documents	May 9-15, 2007
Pre-bid Conference	May 17, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.,CVMC Conference Hall
Submission and opening of Bids	May 31, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m.,CVMC Conference Hall

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of two thousand five hundred pesos (P2,500.00). The method of payment will be cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC)
EMMANUEL F. ACLUBA, MD, MHA, Chief of Hospital
Carig Sur, Tuguegarao City
(078) 844-0033, 1810, 1410
(078) 844-3789

(Sgd.) **RAMON P. GONZALEZ, MD, FPCP**
BAC, Chairman

(PDI - May 5, 2007)

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
sbma Bldg. 255, Barryman St.,Subic Bay Freeport Zone Philippines
(6347) 252-4214/4283 Fax: (6347) 252-4284

2nd Bidding

SBMABAC-INV-03-07
Photocopying Services
SBMA, SBF7

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

LOT I *One (1) Year Contract for Photocopying Services* P 2,500,000.00

Brief Description :

The SBMA has 44 existing departments with 49 units of photocopiers to serve its needs. On the average, 500,000 copies per month are reproduced using photocopying machines.

The SBMA seeks for a photocopying firm capable of providing this photocopying requirement in which the photocopying equipment shall be on rental/lease scheme for the period of one (1) year.

Prospective bidders should have proof of completion of a similar project within the last two (2) the single largest of which must be equivalent to at least fifty percent (50%) of the proposed project for bidding and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the terms of reference (TOR). The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of the bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*	*Venue*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 7 to 15, 2007 (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)	BAC Secretariat Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD) Rm. 201, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ.
2. Pre-Bid Conference	May 16, 2007 Wednesday (2:00 p.m.)	PPMD Conference Room Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD) Rm. 201, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ.
3. Opening of Bids	May 30, 2007 Wednesday (2:00 p.m.)	PPMD Conference Room Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD) Rm. 201, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ.

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of ***P1,500.00*** to the SBMA Cashier at Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ.

The SBMA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **ATTY. JOCELYN G. ALVARADO**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 5, 2007)

mercury drug
MAKASISIGURO GAMOT AY LAGING BAGO
DISCOUNTS FOR SUKI CARD HOLDERS!
SUKI SABADO SPECIAL
MAY 5 TO 11, 2007
Per DOH-BFAD Permit No 0420 s.2007
Mefenamic Acid
PONSTAN SF CAPSULE
Adverse Reaction: Drowsiness, Hypersensitivity, Diarrhea
250MG
REG. PRICE: P 12.25
Polymyxin B Sulfate + Bacitracin Zinc + Neomycin Sulfate
TERRAMYCIN PLUS OINTMENT
Adverse Reaction: None
3.5 GRAMS
REG. PRICE: P 164.00
CREAMSILK
THICK & STRONG
STRAIGHT & RELAXED
200ML
REG. PRICE: P 82.50
ITCH & DANDRUFF FREE
PROTECT& REVITALIZE
200ML
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SUNSILK SHAMPOO
BLACK SHINE
SOFT TOUCH
SOFTENING A-DD
STRONG ENDS
RELAX & CONTROL
200 ML
REG. PRICE: P 82.50
NIVEA DEO WHTNG R-ON 50ML
REG. PRICE: P 78.50
NIVEA BODY WHTNG BLOT
75ML REG. PRICE: P 73.25
150 ML REG. PRICE: P 127.25
250ML REG. PRICE: P 190.50
NIVEA BODY UV PRTCTN LOT
150 ML REG. PRICE: P 127.25
250ML REG. PRICE: P 203.75
PONDS WH BEAUTY TNER
30 ML REG. PRICE: P 30.25
60ML REG. PRICE: P 54.50
100ML
REG. PRICE: P 89.75
Enchanted Kingdom
3+1
BARKADA SUMMER PROMO
Mercury Drug Suki Card holders can buy 3 Enchanted Kingdom regular day passes and get 1 FREE!
Please call (02) 843-6074 to 78 or visit your nearest Mercury Drug branch for more details.
Promo runs April 1 to June 30, 2007
Per DTI Laguna Permit No 5-03-118 s. 2007

AMUSEMENT Girls wave at a passing parade of painted carabaos during the 34th Carroza Festival in Pavia, Iloilo. The carabaos compete in a race that has become a sport of sorts in the community. Carabao-racing fans flock to the town during the feast. ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Lacson questions 'Tagaytay 5' detention

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Reelectionist opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson questioned the continued detention of the five Tagaytay farmers suspected of being communist rebels during a surprise visit to this camp on Friday.

Lacson, a former police officer, said the decision of Tagaytay Judge Edwin Larida to detain the five men in Camp Vicente Lim was dubious because the court does not have any jurisdiction over the police camp.

"(Technically), the court does not have the right to issue a commitment order for you here as they have no jurisdiction over this camp," Lacson told the prisoners.

The five—Axel Pinpin, Riel Custodio, Michael Masayes, Rico Ybañez and Aris Sarmiento—said they have repeatedly requested for their transfer to the Cavite Provincial Jail or Tagaytay City Jail.

But officials of the Calabarzon police opposed all the motions filed by the prisoners, Sarmiento said.

"They (Calabarzon police officials) wanted to bring us to Camp Crame. We resisted that because it would be more difficult for our families to visit us if we're transferred to Camp Crame," Sarmiento said.

Lacson's presence at the camp surprised policemen assigned at the base police station. He arrived at around 11:10 a.m. in a white car without any armed bodyguards except for a driver and a staffer.

Before he left, policemen, including ranking police officials, posed for pictures.

"We will surely vote for you," a police officer said.

Lacson also supported the demands of the detainees for better prison conditions.

Lacson looked stunned after he was told that the custodial team assigned to look after the five had no standing policy regarding the sunning and exercise session of the detainees.

REELECTIONIST opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson visits the five Tagaytay farmers in their detention cell in Camp Vicente Lim, Laguna. MARLON RAMOS/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Lacson then questioned the circumstances regarding the arrest of the five detainees.

He said if the prisoners' allegation that they were arrested without warrant was true, the intelligence operatives who seized the five could be held liable for violation of human rights.

"It's wrong to detain anybody without warrant. The police do not have any legal custody (of the five)," he said.

He said he would review the case of the five and promised to provide them with a legal team.

He also advised the five not to embark on another hunger strike as it may only put their health at risk.

Lacson said the five should now concentrate on their legal battle.

"Although you have made a strong statement by going on a hunger strike, you must also consider its lasting effect on your health," Lacson said. "The bottom line here is the legal battle." *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Comelec gives military bigger role to play in Samar elections

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE COMMISsion on Elections (Comelec) has deputized the military in Samar to allow it to be more visible in the elections.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Ponce, commanding officer of the 62nd Infantry Battalion (IB) based in Calbiga town, said that the Comelec has allowed the military to participate in the May 14 elections.

Aside from his battalion, Ponce said the Comelec also deputized the members of the 42nd Infantry Battalion, based in San Jorge and under the command of Lt. Col. Vincent Lacderas.

"Both battalions were deputized by the Comelec to play an active role in the forthcoming elections. We will assist and work together with the Philippine National Police (PNP)," Ponce said.

With the Comelec order, he said the military could enter not only school premises serving as polling areas but also the polling precincts.

Without the order, soldiers are allowed to stay 50 meters away from the polling precincts.

"But our role will be limited. We cannot do anything which can be interpreted as prohibited or those not allowed by the Comelec under the order," Ponce said.

He could not say what other tasks the soldiers would perform in the elections but he said they would act immediately on any order issued by the Comelec.

Ponce said the presence of the military could prevent bloodshed during the conduct of the elections in Samar, which has 22 towns.

ELEKSYON 2007

Friendly campaign

COTABATO CITY—IF THE CAMPAIGN is bloody in other areas of the country, candidates here appear to be cooperating with each other.

The most notable thing among politicians here is that they even welcome each other in their turfs and during public forums.

The latest was on Wednesday, when Maguindanao Rep. Zeny Dilangalen, who is running for city mayor, made a surprise campaign sortie at Barangay Don E. Sero here.

Dilangalen was met by the council slate of opponent Estrellita Juliano, led by Barangay Chair Rodolfo Maglalang.

Earlier, incumbent Mayor Mus Sema, the administration candidate, also declared a common poster area outside the new City Hall for opposition candidates.

Sema also welcomes partisan barangay officials, who are using private vehicles bearing posters of rival candidates, to the City Hall.

The city mayoralty race is contested by Sema, Dilangalen and Juliano, while lone House seat in Shariff Kabunsuan, which now includes the city, is being contested by former Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, Zeny's husband, and Sandra Sema, the mayor's wife. *Nash B. Maulana, Inquirer Mindanao*

Ecleos rule

BUTUAN CITY—FOUR MEMBERS OF the powerful Ecleo political clan are running unopposed for the May 14 local elections, a situation that could strengthen the clan's grip on the newly created province of Dinagat.

Elvis Dela Merced, spokesperson of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA), the cult founded by the Ecleo patriarch, said no politician had surfaced to contest the leadership of the members of the clan.

Dela Merced, who is running for vice governor, said former Surigao del Norte Rep. Glenda Ecleo will represent the new province's lone district in Congress while her youngest daughter Gwendolyn Ecleo-Villaroman is bound to be governor of the province.

Ecleo siblings, Allan II and Benglen, are also assured of another term as mayors of San Jose and Dinagat towns, respectively.

The Ecleos are close allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Representative Ecleo's eldest son, Ruben Jr., was charged with the death of his wife, Alona, in Cebu. *Franklin M. Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao*

Bulacan solon: Abductions of leftists alarming

BULACAN FOURTH DISTRICT REP. REYLINA "Neneng" Nicolas on Thursday expressed alarm over the disappearance of Jonas Burgos and two others who were abducted last Saturday in Quezon City.

"I am alarmed by the continued disappearance of Jonas Burgos," Nicolas said in a press statement.

"I join the nation in condemning this blatant act of human rights violation."

Edith Burgos, mother of the missing victim and wife of the late Malaya publisher Joe Burgos, had said her son was an activist and member of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Bulacan, which is involved in providing training to its members.

Nicolas said she understands the cause that the young Burgos is fighting for since it was the same principle that she believed in.

"Mr. Burgos is a man who fights for the rights of the farmers and teachers for them to be self reliant, the same principles I believe in," she said.

Nicolas, who in recent surveys in the 4th district showed her with a 67-percent vote over her closest rival, said if given a fresh mandate, she would continue the fight for the rights of farmers and push for their continued education.

During her term as congresswoman, Nicolas instituted livelihood projects where she gave additional capital or start-up capital to cooperatives for the poor under the Mahihirap Program Fund of the Cooperative Development Authority (MPFCDA).

She also paved the way for the construction of 90 farm-to-market roads.

She also helped implement the Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran (SEA-K) Program with the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

At least 360 families received piglets to start their piggery businesses.

INQUIRER Visayas

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Website: www.inquirer.net/regions
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Rights lawyer uses VCD to campaign

By Carla P. Gomez
Bacolod City

A HUMAN RIGHTS lawyer and peace advocate fighting traditional politics is running a campaign to be a congressman of Bacolod City in an innovative way: He is using videotapes to reach as many voters as he can. Andy Hagad, who is running against close administration ally incumbent Rep. Monico Puentevella (Lakas CMD) and Bacolod City Vice Mayor Renecito Novero (NPC), is a candidate on the white list of the Black and White Movement.

"I decided to run as a congressional candidate in Bacolod out of sheer frustration at the way the political parties and the traditional politicians were treating our government and our electoral process," he said.

Hagad's decision to run was made very late, in fact just the day before the March 29 deadline for filing the certificates of candidacy. While the others were already on the campaign trail by April 1, he was just planning how to organize his campaign machinery.

"It took 10 days to find and equip our campaign headquarters; find the initial capitalization of P60,000 donated by two friends; recruit our first volunteers, mostly ladies from my wife Blandy's exercise group and their children; and have our streamers, posters and campaign paraphernalia made," he said.

Then, loyal volunteers from his first congressional bid during the 2001 local elections started to troop back and offered their services again, Hagad added. He began actual campaign sorties on April 10.

Different

Hagad said from the start he resolved to conduct his campaign totally different from the way the traditional politicians were doing it. He would follow the Election Code strictly.

That means adhering to the P3 per voter limit on campaign expenditure; setting up streamers and posters only at the campaign headquarters, the designated poster areas and on private property with the owner's consent.

"I am running my campaign machinery on a strictly volunteer basis. That way I would be freed from the huge, millions of pesos, payroll expense that traditional politicians are forced to shoulder. There will be no barangay leaders, *kagawads*, *purok* (sub-village) leaders or family leaders," he said.

"We are conducting our campaign at the root of the system, at the voters themselves, to convince them to vote as intelligent and independent individuals and not as veritable sheep being told by their leaders whom to vote for," he said.

Since his running is advocacy-focused, to reform the way the electoral campaign process was being conducted, Hagad said the issue he has raised in the campaign trail is different.

Hagad focuses his discussion on the expenses incurred by a city mayor and a congressman running under the traditional mode that go up to about P36 million. He also noted that the city mayor and the congressman only receive total salaries amounting to P1.2 million and P2.4 million, respectively, for three years.

He then asks the voters: how are they going to reimburse and repay the balance without being corrupt? He points out, that if politicians are corrupt today, the problem is not with the candidates, but with the traditional political system of getting elected, which inevitably corrupt them, he said.

This campaign issue was the same one that he advocated when he first ran for Congress, but lost, in 2001.

"The problem was that since I also ran as an independent, my *pulong-pulong* (meetings) allowed me to talk about it to less

HAGAD

than 10,000 voters out of the 261,000 then registered with the Comelec (Commission on Elections). Certainly, not enough to win the elections," he said.

Based on his 2001 experience, Hagad said he and his group saw the need for innovative campaigning to bring his advocacy to enough voters so he would have "a fighting chance to win."

"One of the most effective ways we adopted was brother Danny's suggestion to have my campaign speech recorded in a VCD. I did an 18-minute spiel which ended with the exhortation that the voters vote all independent candidates from senator down to city councilor, to send a clear message to the trapos to reform," he said.

A friend volunteered to burn 2,000 copies, 95 percent of these distributed by volunteers in all 800 or so puroks in Bacolod, Hagad said.

Supporters from the middle and upper classes in Bacolod then got the remaining five percent with the promise that they will in turn burn additional copies and again spread these down to the puroks, he said.

This way, Hagad estimates that by Election Day he will have reached at least 80 percent of the 253,000 or so voters that were listed for the 2007 elections in Bacolod.

"The idea worked magnificently. By the second week of our campaign sorties, residents would run after our 'trompa' (megaphone) asking for more CDs," he said.

Hot item

The CD became a hot item because, for the first time, people realized how expensive a "trapo" campaign is and why the temptation for the winner to go the way of the corrupt becomes so strong, Hagad said.

"The hunger to know why our country had become the most corrupt nation in Asia was a chord that the VCD touched all the way down to the heart," he said.

The VCD was also more effective than the rallies and the "miting de avance" that the traditional politicians adopted because voters listened to my speech in their living rooms and even in their bedrooms, he said.

"It became a more personal and intimate conversation with the candidate. It was also much cheaper. Each VCD cost P7 thanks to the businessman-supporter who cut his profits down to the bare minimum in order to help. Then there were the volunteers. bless their patriotic hearts," he said.

There is Gloria Mirasol, an Ulirang Nanay awardee, who with all of her children, dropped everything to join Hagad in the campaign trail.

The volunteers also include Santos Dedase Jr., a tricycle driver who works with them from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., then spend the rest of the evening and early morning hours driving his tricycle to earn some daily income "Since he joined our campaign two weeks ago, his only sleep would be catnaps at the back of the pick-up in between the *pulong-pulong*," Hagad said.

Another volunteer, Merlinda Alojado, is a retired policewoman whom everyone they met on the campaign trail calls Kumare. "Alojado could convince even the most ardent supporters from the other side to take up our cause," Hagad said.

Lerma Tanudra, a wholesaler of fruits in Bacolod, gave up many business opportunities to go into the puroks to distribute Hagad's flyers.

Pacit Tolentio, a beautician, resigned from her job in the parlor to join the campaign, he said.

Birthplace of skimboarding in Leyte draws huge crowd

By Vicente S. Labro
Tanauan, Leyte

HUNDREDS of people braved the scorching heat of the summer sun to watch an annual water sports event from the long, sandy beach of Tanauan, Leyte, starting on Easter Sunday.

A SKIMBOARDER tests the waters of Tanauan, Leyte. VEN LABRO

The three-day National Skimboarding Competition kicked off on April 8 at the Bantay Dagat beach area, drawing 120 participants who displayed their skills in a sport that originated abroad.

Many more skimmers wanted to join but the organizers had decided to limit the number on the suggestion of the Philippine Skimboarding Association, Tanauan Mayor Roque Tiu said.

Tiu said the participants came from the towns of Tanauan, Tolosa, Sta. Fe and Dulag, and the cities of Tacloban, Ormoc and Maasin, all in Leyte; and from Cebu, Surigao del Sur, Naga City, Davao City and Lapulapu City.

A 24-year-old Singaporean, Arthur Kor, also competed. He said he was in Tanauan last year for a skimboarding exhibition.

Cool game, cool place

"The game is really cool ... the place is good and there are many nice people," Kor said. His trip was sponsored by Pearl of the Orient Skimboard, a maker of skim boards based in Malaysia.

This year's event included for the first time a "wahini" (female) division and a grommet division for the young.

Nineteen-year-old Sherryl Pajelleno, a homegrown competitor, was among the favorites. She has been skimboarding for about six years, she said.

"I enjoy the sport ... it's thrilling," said Sherryl, adding that the competition also allowed her to meet new friends.

James Ferguson, an American who is married to a native of Tanauan for 11 years, was the one who suggested to the mayor to allow women to join.

Ferguson, who runs a humanitarian foundation, said he had sponsored the Tanauan women's team, "which is my pleasure because they are fantastic and I wanted to give them an opportunity [to compete]."

A prize of P20,000 went to the winner of each category, while the second, third and fourth placers got P15,000, P10,000 and P5,000, respectively.

Hometown champ Dariel Espada won his third championship trophy when he topped the open category again. Next to him was his brother Leo (first runner-up), Ricky Bañez (second runner-up), Lemuel Cobacha (third runner-up) and Obet Yanuario (fourth runner-up). All are natives of Tanauan.

In the wahini division, Sheryll bagged the championship, followed by Kikay Espada (first runner-up) and Tina Cumpio (2nd runner-up), both of Tanauan. Charmie Ann Deliarte of Talisay City in Cebu was third runner-up.

The top two winners in the grommet division were also from Tanauan: Carl Gabas (champion) and Nico Cobacha (first runner-up). Second runner-up was Arjon Jimenez of Talisay, while the third and fourth runners-up were Rolly Abarca and Herold Vargas, both from Tanauan.

US visitor

Tanauan boasts of being the birthplace of skimboarding in the country. In 2000, an American tourist from California visited the town and introduced the water sport to several youngsters. He also taught the locals how to make skim boards.

Since then, a friendly skimboarding competition has been held every year.

The sport caught the attention of nearby towns and other parts of the country, bringing an increasing number of participants to the annual competition in Tanauan every year.

Skimboarding is a popular recreation sport in the United States, Canada, Australia, Spain and many other places, albeit not as popular here as surfing.

A discipline of surfing, skimboarding involves riding a board on wet sand or shallow water. But unlike surfing where one has to look for big waves breaking far from shore, skimboarding starts at the beach where short-break waves could be found.

The skimboarder would run fast, drop and mount his board before reaching the break point of the wave.

The skim boards are smaller than surf boards because they do not require as much buoyancy. Skim boards are usually oval or teardrop-shaped, although some are circular.

HOW TO GET ELECTED (OR NOT)

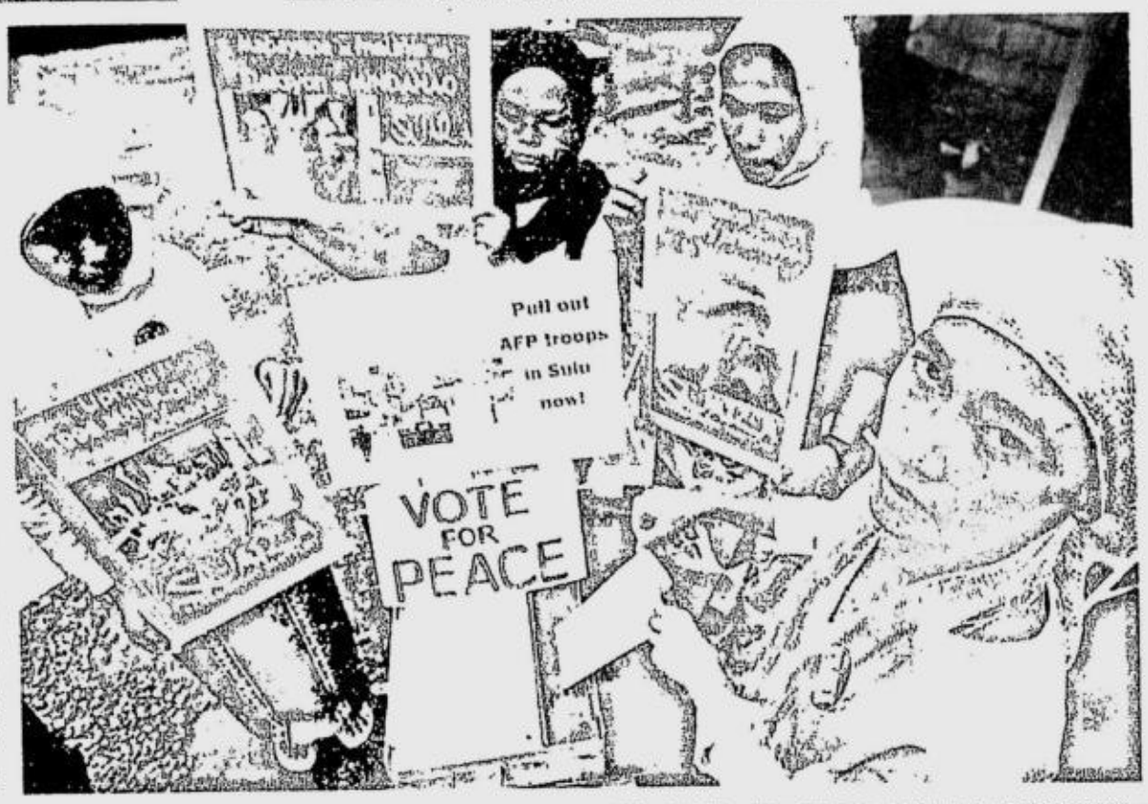
REM ZAMORA

CAMERA READY: Mike Defensor gets a touch of powder during a shoot for a TV ad in Smokey Mountain in Tondo, which the administration's senatorial bet calls his "last hurrah."

NOT JUST KISSING BABIES. Eating fishballs by the roadside at the UP College of Fine Arts gives Kiko Pangilinan that common touch.
AUGUST DELA CRUZ

REUTERS

THE THIRD FORCE: Between the Pinedas and the Lapids of Pampanga, there is Fr. Ed Panlilio who vows to fight corruption, "jueteng" and other alleged misdeeds of the past and incumbent governors if elected to that post.



CHALLENGE TO WANNABES: Members of the Bangsamoro want candidates to visit war-ravaged Sulu for them to experience first hand how the people are going through a humanitarian crisis. At a press conference in Quezon City on Friday, the woman leader said her group is alarmed that women and children caught in the crossfire and staying in evacuation centers make do without the basic needs for a decent life.
JOAN BONDOC

BULLIT MARQUEZ/AP

REM ZAMORA

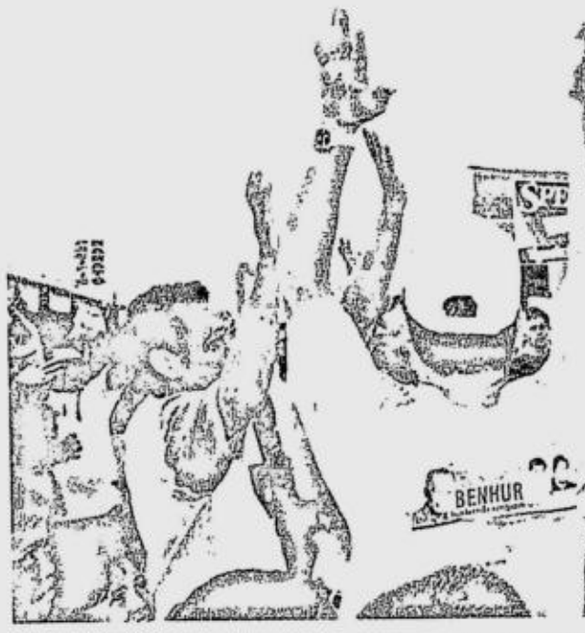
THAT OAKWOOD LOOK: Look-a-like supporters of detained Ltsg. Antonio Trillanes, who's aspiring for a Senate seat, are on their way to picket the Makati Regional Court to demand his release.

TESSIE AQUINO-ORETA expanded on her platform at "Isang Tanong" on GMA 7 during its premier telecast last Sunday. It featured 13 Senate bets and netted a 17-percent viewership considered high for a late night, public affairs show.
GMA 7

HARD TO TELL if these masked youthful protesters in Metro Manila are for or against the administration candidates. What's clear is that they are against what they claim is the trending of the results of SWS survey.

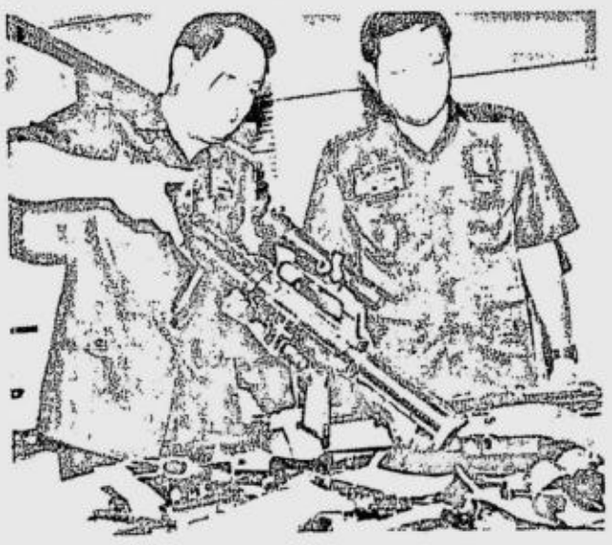
JOAN BONDOC

THE ERAP FACTOR still figures in the Genuine Opposition campaign as evidenced by its candidates like reelectionist Ping Lacson, making a beeline for the former President when he was allowed a furlough on May 2 to be with his mother on her 102nd birthday in San Juan.



STYLISH, SHAPELY Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia seeking a second term, campaigns in Bogo, her rival's territory.
TONEE DESPOJO/CDN

NOT BALLOTS BUT BLOODY BULLETS



SEIZED high-powered guns are inspected by PNP chief Gen. Oscar Calderon (left). Since the gun ban for the election period began last Monday, a total of 1,820 firearms have been confiscated in a fresh drive against loose firearms.
BULLIT MARQUEZ/APER NORTHERN LUZON

ON THIS SPOT marks where Sta. Fe, Bantayan Island, mayoralty candidate Rogelio Ilustrisimo fell in front of the provincial Comelec office in Cebu City.
JUNJIE MENDOZA/CDN

BULLIT MARQUEZ/AP

FIRST VICTIM of an election-related killing in Albay: Retired Chief Insp. Enrique Bausa, running for councilor as an independent, was shot dead on Thursday afternoon.
NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

ARTIST'S SKETCH of suspect in the Resuello killing in San Carlos City, Pangasinan, is presented by Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Ilocos police director. At left is city election officer Remarque Ravanzo.
RAY B. ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER

List of 91 party-list groups and their nominees

I-UTAK
1. Vigor Ma. D. Mendoza II
2. Homero A. Mercado
3. Zenaida J. De Castro
4. Efren A. De Luna
5. Ryan Benjamin C. Yu

AA-KASOSYO
1. Dionisio G. Magpantay
2. Felix A. Brawner Jr.
3. Caridad R. Delgado
4. Luis R. Casimiro
5. Alberto L. Ong Jr.
6. Francis T. Afulugencia

AT
1. Daryl Grace J. Abayon
2. Eden Debulgado Rivera
3. Meriam Lasta Paylaga
4. Jean Andaca Bautista
5. Dannelyn J. Letran

ABAKADA
1. Jonathan A. dela Cruz
2. Samson S. Alcantara
3. Cecilia M. Dy
4. Jose Floro P. Crisologo
5. Jerry D. Alfonso

ABANSE PINAY
1. Teresa Banaynal Fernandez
2. Kalayaan Pulido-Constantino
3. Yasmin B. Lao
4. Rebecca N. Tañada
5. Isabelita Solamo Antonio
6. Lucia Evelina O. Melecio-Tan
7. Paulina Lawsin Nayra
8. Mary Ann Duran-Dino

ABA ILONGGO
1. Aguinaldo L. Miravalles
2. Arturo P. Mejorada
3. Robert C. Doromal
4. Anecito B. Magbato
5. Rogelio S. Setubal

ABONO
1. Roberto Raymund M. Estrella
2. Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega
3. Ramon M. Morden
4. Rosendo O. So
5. Fa Sison Almasan

ADD-TRIBAL
1. Dr. Abdurahman U. Amin
2. Dr. Najemah Mokiin S. Malna
3. Datu Tayan P. Sangki
4. Atty. Hasan G. Alam
5. John Albert E. Cerveza

ADD
1. Roberto M. Mutia
2. Sanipa R. Camid
3. Nonoy G. Maunting

A TEACHER
1. Mariano U. Piamonte Jr.
2. Ulpiano P. Sarmiento III
3. Carolina C. Porio
4. Nenita V. Habulan
5. Julieta R. Cortuna

ASAHAN MO
1. Oscar G. Yabes
2. David Jonathan V. Yap
3. Lino Siao Ong
4. Jose L. Lipa Jr.
5. Voltaire Dela Cruz Mauricio

AGBIAG
1. Marcelo T. Farinas II
2. Samuel V. Tomas
3. Rogelio G. Mendoza
4. Ruth Joy L. Guinid
5. Alex M. Manalo

AGING PINOY
1. Edwin L. Lisondra
2. Ernesto M. Camaino
3. Rosalinda V. Dacanay
4. Alma A. Lood
5. Esther B. Sales

AGAP
1. Nicanor M. Briones
2. Cesar A. Cobrador
3. Rico B. Geron
4. Albert Roque T. Lim
5. Victorino Michael I. Lescano

AHON
1. Dante Francis M. Ang II
2. Bernardo F. Ople
3. Ernesto C. Herrera III
4. Alfredo M. De La Rosa
5. Ricardo S. Arevalo

AHONBAYAN
1. Edgar A. Catarongan
2. Edgardo C. Manda
3. Raden C. Sakaluran
4. Antonio Mariano C. Almeda
5. Erlindo L. Modar

APOI
1. Melchor P. Rosales
2. Floyd M. Feraren
3. Adelaida S. Lazaro
4. Alexander S. Galura
5. Zanaida D. Toledo

AKBAYAN
1. Ana Theresia H. Hontiveros-Baraquel
2. Walden F. Bello
3. Enrico G. Dayanghirang
4. Byron D. Bocar
5. Vicente A. Fabe

AKSA
1. Elizabeth C. Angsioco
2. Timoteo A. Aranjuez
3. Mao K. Andong Jr.
4. Fernando D. Gana
5. Donna Antoinette A. Casio
6. Hadji A. Balajadia

ALAGAD
1. Rodante D. Marcoleta
2. Alberto M. Malvar
3. Sergio C. Manzana
4. Renato S. Cabling
5. Miguelito C. Bajas

Second set of nominees
1. Diogenes S. Osabel
2. Julian C. Mislang Jr.
3. Ric O. Domingo
4. Henry A. Asistin
5. Hermenegildo T. Encierto Jr.

ABAY PARAK
1. Nilo L. Geonzon
2. Datu Michael A. Kida
3. Virgilio M. Acabal
4. Mervin S. Natalicio
5. Nilo R. Quiros

ABC
1. Rafaelito N. Villavicencio
2. Josephine G. Herrera
3. Jovita Tuela Z. Ouano
4. Emmanuel Thomas H. Neria

ANAD
1. Pastor M. Alcover Jr.
2. Ruben R. Platon
3. David S. Odilao Jr.
4. Provo B. Antipasado Jr.
5. Domingo M. Balang

AAWAS
1. Ranulfo C. Feliciano
2. Isidro G. Lapuz
3. Lope B. Santos III
4. Atty. Ranulfo P. Verian
5. Engr. Ascencion G. Fonte Jr.

ANC
1. Gamaliel A. Cordoba
2. Quirino D. Dela Torre
3. Emilio B. Cadayona
4. Manuel C. Reyes Jr.
5. Rene P. De Asis Jr.

APO
1. Oscar A. Marmeto
2. Val Adriano Guevara
3. Remigio C. Agustin
4. Allan M. Maasir
5. Cesar Y. Palma

ARC
1. Narciso D. Santiago III
2. Oscar D. Francisco
3. Kashmir B. Leyretana
4. Basilio P. Propongo
5. Isidro A. Suedad

VENDORS
1. Yussuf C.R. Macalangcom
2. Naguib A. Munder
3. Saidamen M. Tabao
4. Hilda Sacay-Clave
5. Narciso G. Quiogue

AVE
1. Eulogio R. Magsaysay
2. Jose C. Baesa
3. Adelaide R. Magsaysay
4. Percival J. Macapagal
5. Aladino L. Leccio

ATS
1. Jaime S. Domdom
2. Sarcawi H. Nasser
3. Leopoldo M. Villarena
4. Floro S. Arceta
5. Benjamin E. Rubio

ALMANA
1. Honesto L. Cueva
2. Ernesto R. Arellano
3. Eduardo F. Landayan
4. Lourdes A. Gula
5. Mario L. Aguirre

AKAPIN
1. Oscar J. Taleon
2. Teofilo B. dela Cruz
3. Jonathan P. Capanas
4. Marlon C. Advincula
5. Carmen R. Zubiaga

AGHAM
1. Emil Q. Javier
2. Saeed Serapio A. Daof
3. Angel C. Alcala
4. Mario M. Movillon
5. Ruben C. Gamala

ASAP
1. Voltaire Francisco B. Banzon
2. Roy P. Mahinay Sr.
3. Carlito B. Cubelo
4. Anthony B. Francisco
5. Leonora M. Protacio
6. Amado J. Domingo

ABA-AKO
1. Leonardo Q. Montemayor
2. Dioscoro A. Granada
3. Manuel G. Arejola
4. Percival C. Chavez
5. Bernadette B. Lingo
6. Rene C. Bullecer

AN WARAY
1. Florencio Gabriel G. Noel
2. Neil Benedict A. Montejo
3. Michelle P. Mendiola
4. Jason L. Alve
5. Ranilo T. Maat

AMIN
1. Mujiv S. Hataman
2. Ariel C. Hernandez
3. Arnel N. Arbison
4. Erlinda N. Senturias
5. Quini Gine W. Areola

ANAK PAWIS
1. Crispin B. Beltran
2. Rafael V. Mariano
3. Joel B. Maglunsod
4. Fernando L. Hicap
5. Ferdinand R. Gaite
6. not submitted
7. Jaime S. Paglinawan
8. Orly E. Marcellana
9. Joselito V. Ustarez
10. Wilfredo A. Marbella
11. Jose Roy G. Velez
12. Nicolas S. Galia
13. Carmen T. Buena
14. Jacinto F. Tanduyan
15. Medardo R. Roda

BANDILA
1. Luth Myr P. Teoxon
2. Lucas M. Managuelod
3. Benasing A. Macarambon III
4. Alexander D. Mañalac
5. Gilberto A. Ricafort

A.G.
1. Bernardo R. Corella Jr.
2. Ronnie D. Remedios
3. Leborio M. Jangao Jr.
4. Bai H. Laila Y. Abbas
5. Enrique S. Atanacio

ALIF
1. Hon. Acmad M. Tomawis
2. Aissah M. Tomawis
3. Raima Macalandong T. Cali
4. Jamela M. Tomawis
5. Gamal M. Tomawis

A SMILE
1. Eduardo Ma. R. Santos
2. Ronald Francisco Lim
3. Anthony P. Dequiña
4. Jaime G. Napoles
5. Manuel R. Jarmin

AANGAT KA PILIPINO
1. Eduardo C. Morales
2. Nasser J. Halipa
3. Solomon C. Canoy
4. Ephraim P. Advincula
5. Elias B. Beltran

ANAK
1. Eduardo B. Octaviano Jr.
2. Delfin C. Genio Jr.
3. Kenneth T. Gatchalian
4. Ramon L. Morillo
5. Marcelo D. Sigue

ABS
1. Catalina G. Leonen-Pizarro
2. Eugene Michael B. De Vera
3. Catalino O. Lanting
4. Yolanda C. Aguilar
5. Mary T. Jazul
6. Justino I. Valdez

AMANG
1. Marcelino P. Arias
2. Giovanni H. Melgar
3. Enrique M. Fajardo
4. Agustin B. Abella
5. Isagani G. Calderon

ASSALAM
1. Datu Pendatun B. Disimban
2. Bai Sittie Zohora Montañer
3. Jolly S. Lais
4. Anwar Tucal Rasul
5. Abdulrakman S. Ampatuan

AAPS
1. Edna B. Azurin
2. Joseph O. Logronio
3. Rene B. Azurin
4. Josefina E. San Juan
5. Felicisima S. Teodoro

APEC
1. Edgar L. Valdez
2. Ernesto C. Pablo
3. Sunny Rose A. Madamba
4. Mariano C. Corvera Jr.
5. Ponciano D. Payuyo
6. Lamberto M. Canlas

BABAE KA
1. Rosalinda Q. Dagami
2. Ruth T. Vasquez
3. Maria Corazon M. Tumang
4. Aida Cristina M. Suñga
5. Ma. Luisa Z. Lantin *

BAGO
1. Alexander G. Bistoyong
2. Perfecto U. Litap
3. Rudolfo A. Lockey
4. Inocencio G. Carganilla
5. George D. Banayos

BATAS
1. Daniel S. Razon
2. Melanio L. Mauricio Jr.
3. Jose Y. Sonza
4. Ariel M. Pacis
5. Olivia G. Coo

BTM
1. Arthur Alvin A. Aguilar
2. Mignon M. Fernando
3. Armando M. Escanto
4. Norman Vincent S. Bungubung
5. Richard V. Reverente

BAHANDI
1. Ali B. Sangki
2. Eduard B. Trinidad
3. Jose G. Agduma
4. Esteban M. Salinas
5. Julio R. Bincay

BANAT
1. Salvador B. Britanico
2. Raul Lambino
3. Joel C. Mendez
4. Ricardo G. San Juan Jr.
5. Rodolfo R. Zalazar

BAYAN MUNA
1. Saturnino C. Ocampo
2. Teodoro A. Casiño
3. Neri J. Colmenares
4. Elpidio A. Pulmano
5. Alfonso M. Cinco IV
6. Siegfred D. Deduro
7. Roman L. Polintan
8. Bayani O. Cambronero
9. Hope V. Hervilla
10. Cynthia N. Lumbera
11. Joven G. Laura

BIGKIS
1. Sheryl G. See
2. Johnny G. Tan
3. Carlos A. Bathan
4. Mario B. Cornista
5. Tomas C. Toledo

BP
1. Jesus C. Cruz
2. Arsenio S. Abalos
3. Mary Rose Magsaysay-Crisostomo
4. Danilo B. Cagas
5. Muamar Abudurahim Akbar

BIYAYANG BUKID
1. Teofilo M. Villamar
2. John Erwin S. Teodoro
3. Teodoro G. Montoro
4. Arsenio A. Esteras Jr.
5. Albino C. Pardiñez Jr.

BUHAY
(First set of nominees)
1. Hans Christian M. Señeres
2. Hermenegildo C. Dumlao
3. Antonio R. Bautista
4. Victor Pablo C. Trinidad
5. Eduardo C. Solangon Jr.

Second set of nominees
1. Rene M. Velarde
2. Ma. Carissa O. Coscolluela
3. William Irwin C. Tieng
4. Melchor R. Monsod
5. Teresita B. Villarama

CIBAC
1. Emmanuel Joel J. Villanueva
2. Luis K. Lokan Jr.
3. Atty. Cinchona C. Gonzales
4. Sherwin N. Tugna
5. Emil L. Galang

SENIOR CITIZENS INC.
1. Atty. Godofredo V. Arquiza
2. Jose T. Pamplona Sr.
3. Bienvenido M. Lim Rañola
4. Marcelino M. dela Cruz
5. Luciano E. Beltran
6. Atty. Benjamin D. Tomimbang Sr.

COCOFED
1. Domingo P. Espina
2. Efren M. Villaseñor
3. Saida E. Wong
4. Federico M. Mortola
5. Oscar T. Pialago

GRECON
1. Pablo R. Gonzales Jr.
2. Helen M. Osin
3. Zenaida D. Lim
4. Fortunato Y. Miranda
5. Celsa J. Bernales

COOPNATCCO
1. Guillermo P. Cua
2. Jose R. Ping-ay
3. Cresente C. Paez
4. Luis D. Carrillo
5. Romulo F. Caceres
6. Emmanuel L. Solis Jr.

DIWA
1. Emmeline Y. Aglipay
2. Pepito M. Pico
3. Jamairy L. Domado
4. J. Roberto L. Abling
5. Luisita P. Agbayani

FPJPM
1. Lorenzo Y. Cadsawan
2. Oscar A. Valera Jr.
3. Roger M. Federezo
4. Evangeline G. Reyes
5. Amoran Mai Batara

GABRIELA
1. Liza T. Largoza-Maza
2. Luzviminda C. Ilagan
3. Flora Belinan
4. Nenita Cherniguin
5. Helen Asdolo
6. Maria Lourdes T. Jarabe
7. Nenita M. Tampico
8. Lucia F. Francisco
9. Elena L. Bianan
10. Marites L. Pielago

HAPI
1. Jaime Flores Zarraga
2. Tranquilino Urmeneta Picson
3. Nino Tolentino Zarraga
4. Ricardo Bopte Pajarillaga
5. Edgardo Macario Roxas

KABATAAN
1. Raymond V. Palatino
2. Enrico P. Almonguerra
3. Mary Francis Veloso
4. Mark Lovis B. Galanga
5. Ma. Clarizza Z. Singson
6. Angela B. Colmenares-Sabino

BUKLOD FILIPINA
1. Zenaida T. Tobias
2. Cynthia L. Lising
3. Virginia A. Teodosio
4. Cristina C. Pacheco
5. Josefina T. Fuentes

KALAHI
1. Apostol Poe M. Gratela
2. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles
3. Luisito V. Clavano
4. Sunday Manlangit Olis
5. Russel Contemplacion Almarez

KAKUSA
1. Ranulfo P. Canonigo
2. Omar A. Rivera
3. Ma. Jesusa A. Sespeñe
4. Josie F. Manalo
5. Ophelia G. Javier

ANG KASANGGA
1. Gaspar DL. Gamban
2. Alvin L. Cabatit
3. Felicitas R. Lomotan
4. Rosalito D. Trinidad
5. Albert K. Suarez

BUTIL
1. Leonila V. Chavez
2. Agapito H. Guanlao
3. Herminio G. Ocampo
4. Reynaldo C. Capalad
5. Rufino C. Hernandez

NEELFFI
1. Hussein P. Pangandaman
2. Perla C. Baldemor
3. Rogelio F. Valle
4. Mohammad Isa Perfecto C. Vergel de Dios Jr.
5. Alfredo I. Nengasca
6. Reuben F. Valle

PEP
1. Philip H. Piccio
2. Vicente P. Ortuoste
3. Victoria Gomez Jacinto
4. Cornelio C. Zafra
5. Jocelyn M. Ulpano

PM
1. Gerardo F. Rivera
2. Judy Ann C. Miranda
3. Ma. Luisa P. Parroco
4. Eliseo D. Alim

PMAP
1. Ronaldo A. Lumbao
2. Benita C. Tanyag
3. Cynthia I. Villarin
4. Jervino N. Maglunob
5. Amado S. Masulit

PBA
1. Davey Christian R. Chua
2. Enrico A. Pineda
3. Jerry Herman G. Codiñera
4. Orlando G. Castelo
5. Steven Anthony T. Relova

SM
1. Sultan Moh'd Yussoph Abdulkhayer P.C. Sambitory
2. Datu Alioden P. Noor Jr.
3. Sdg. Salem O. Batua-An
4. Bai Johaimah N. Sacar
5. Mr. Erwin B. Calauag

SANLAKAS
1. Jose Virgilio L. Bautista
2. Nilda C. Lagman-Sevilla
3. Wilson M. Fortaleza
4. Flora A. Santos
5. Bibiano C. Rivera

SPI
1. Nestor M. Vargas
2. Danilo R. Mauro
3. Marcelino J. Villanueva
4. Rodrigo A. De Villa
5. Ulyses M. Sapalo

SAURA
1. Zaynab A. Ampatuan
2. Amirah Ali Lidasan
3. Samaon Sammy Buat
4. Macasalong P. Sarip
5. Faridah G. Olama

SB
1. Efren O. Docena
2. Roberto G. Brillante
3. Jorge M. Mariano
4. Faustino S. Tugade Jr.
5. Romeo T. Valorozo

BANTAY
1. Jovito S. Palparan Jr.
2. Ramon Y. Garcia
3. Benjamin I. Angeles
4. Alan L. Guevara
5. Agnes L. Reaño

TUCP
1. Raymond D.C. Mendoza
2. Arnel Z. Dolendo
3. Alexander H.G. Aguilar
4. Temistocles S. Dejon Jr.
5. Michael D.C. Mendoza

UMDJ
1. Virgilio S. Eustaquio
2. Salvador S. Panelo
3. Ruben D. Dionisio
4. Denis P. Ibona

UNI-MAD
1. Teodoro L. Lim
2. Alphonsus P. Crucero
3. Enrique B. Galang Jr.
4. Antonio M. Rom III
5. Manuel C. Mendoza

VFP
1. Estrella DL. Santos
2. Ma. Esperanza H. de Ocampo
3. Rey P. Gavina
4. Peregrino M. Andres
5. Justice Manuel R. Pamaran

Second set of nominees
1. Rodrigo B. Gutang
2. Francisco L. Tolin
3. Juanito B. Aquias
4. Jaime C. Echeverria
5. Nestor C. Castillo

YACAP
1. Carol Jayne B. Lopez
2. Haron D. Omar
3. Ernesto A. Moya
4. Arnel A. Zapatos
5. Alexis Wayne P. Valdivia

Pro-GMA bets among 499 in 91 party-list groups

From page A1

close the names of the party-list nominees.

The high court rejected the Comelec's argument that the party-list law did not require that it release the names of the nominees. The Supreme Court said the people's constitutional right to information and the need for transparency in government required otherwise.

Akbayan said it would immediately work on filing disqualification petitions against the party-list organizations and their nominees that it alleged were administration fronts, and urged the Comelec to also act expeditiously on these soon-to-be-filed cases.

"We could have saved a lot of time. We lost about three weeks because of the Comelec's obstructionist policies here. But now, this [list] is the basis of filing disqualification cases against these organizations," Bello said.

In early April, Rosales alleged that a number of party-list organizations were acting as fronts for Malacañang and urged the Comelec to re-assess the accreditations given to them.

Rosales identified these party-list organizations as Ahon Pinoy!; Babae Ka!; Ang Kasangga; Akbay Pinoy; Aksyon Sambayanan (Aksa); Agbiag!; Biyaheng Pinoy; Aangat Tayo; Aangat ang Kabuhayan (Anak); Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (Anad); and Kakusa.

The concerns eventually zeroed in on the party-list nominees themselves as other concerned groups alleged that a group supposedly operating out of Malacañang's Office of External Affairs was running a campaign to get pro-administration party-list groups into Congress.

It was also alleged that "big-time fixers" from the OEA were offering to ensure the accreditation and victory of party-list groups for fees ranging from a low of P100,000 to a high of P10 million.

The supposed purpose of this campaign was to boost the majority numbers in the House of Representatives to quash another possible impeachment attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Bello said the high court decision "derailed" the purported plan of the administration to create a House of Representatives favorable to the President.

"Politics has become arithmetic. What they want to do is to make sure there is a critical mass in Congress to keep her in power. That is why they are willing to bastardize the party-list system," he said.

It was learned yesterday that of the five Comelec commissioners who signed an en banc resolution rejecting the release of the names of party-list nominees, two did not agree with the decision.

Commissioner Rene Sarmiento yesterday confirmed that he and Romeo Brawner voted to have the list released as they believed that access to information was a fundamental, constitutional right.

"It is in Article 3, Section 8 of the Constitution that we have the fundamental right to access to information," Sarmiento said in an interview.

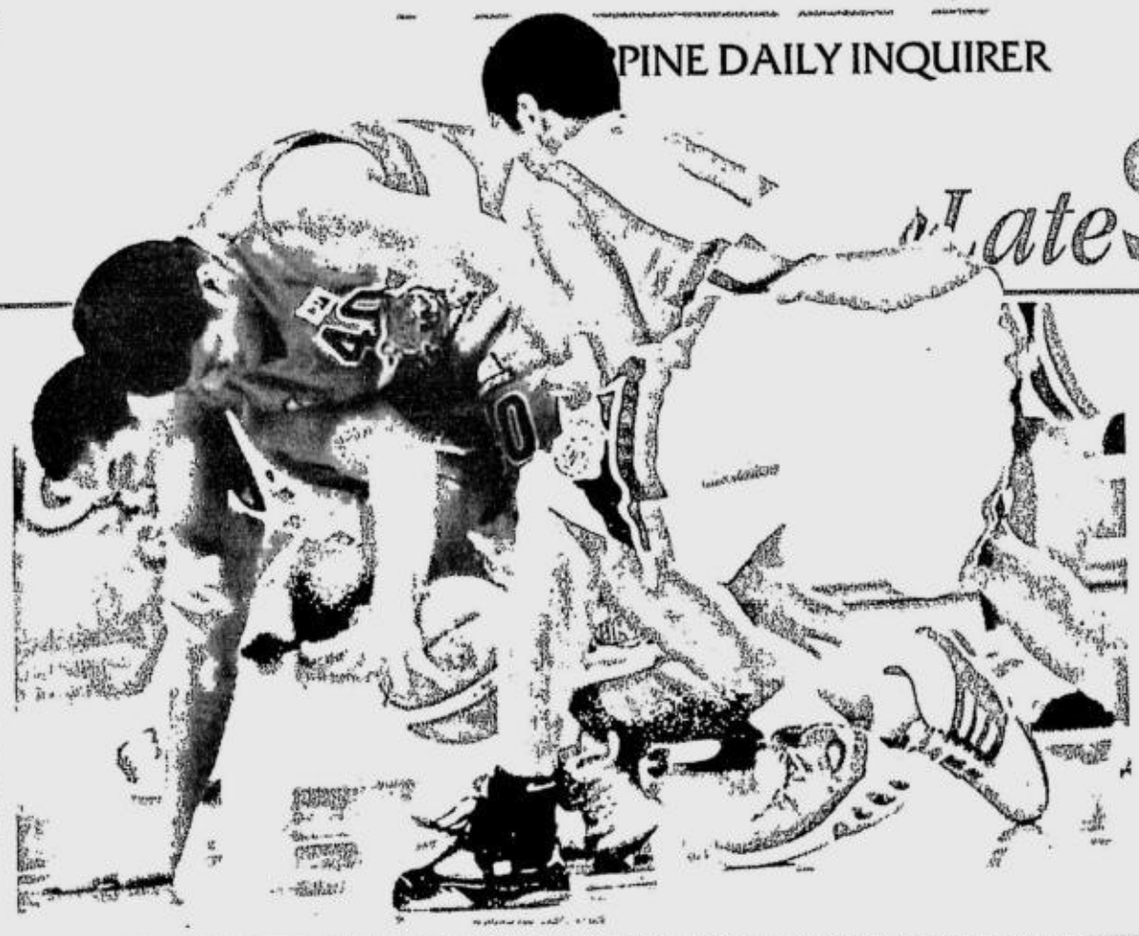
Sarmiento said he scribbled his dissenting opinion beside his signature in Resolution 0724 that was approved on April 3. Brawner wrote beside his signature that he agreed with Sarmiento.

The three other election commissioners—Resurreccion Borra, Florentino Tuason Jr. and Nicodemo Ferrer—stuck to the non-disclosure provision of the party-list law prohibiting the Comelec from revealing the names of the nominees.

The Supreme Court shot down this argument, saying that the Comelec had misread the provision which it said extended only to the certified list that is required to be posted in polling places on Election Day.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. was on official business when the en banc resolution was signed.

More Sports stories on A25 to 28



COCA-COLA bruiser Ricky Calimag gets sandwiched by Purefoods guard Paul Artadi (right) and defensive specialist Rey Evangelista (partly hidden) in the hustle for the loose ball in their game last night. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

LateSPORTS

Phone Pals whip Bulls; Tigers gain

GAME TODAY (*Angeles City*)
6 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Air21

By Musong R. Castillo

PUTTING IT IN TELECOMMUnications lingo, the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals are just really connected right now.

The Phone Pals last night zoomed to their fourth straight win, a 127-100 annihilation of Red Bull in the PBA Fiesta Cup eliminations at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Phone Pals were in command of the highly-physical contest, erecting double digit leads early on to improve to 7-5 overall and inflict on the defending champion Bulls' their first losing streak.

Red Bull dropped to 8-4.

Junthy Valenzuela, the hard-nosed Red Bull guard, was tossed out of the floor after being slapped with a flagrant foul 2 with 9:21 left in the second period and the Phone Pals enjoying a 32-25 lead.

Valenzuela slapped Mark Cardona at the back of the head twice and then threw a punch at the Talk 'N Text guard while they were being pacified. Valenzuela apparently did not like how hard Cardona tagged him during a fastbreak play.

Yancy de Ocampo scored 25 points and grabbed a career-high tying 22 rebounds in a monster performance that proved to be the key even as JJ Sullinger electrified the crowd with some rim-rattling slams on the way to a night-high 35 points.

In the first game, Jeff Varem had 26 points and a season-high 24 rebounds to lead Coca-Cola to an 80-77 decision of a depleted Purefoods squad that snapped a two-game slide by the Tigers.

Varem had his way inside with the Tender Juicy Giants playing without an import. The NBA veteran finally tasted his first PBA-career victory after three games while helping the Tigers rise to 5-7 overall.

Marquin Chandler served out a one-game suspension aside from being asked to pay a P20,000 fine for coming into contact with a game official last April 22 in a game against Red Bull.

But his absence hardly dampened the spirit of Purefoods, which almost got away with a win had James Yap not lost his footing in the final 2.5 seconds. That error by Yap sealed the Giants' eighth defeat in 12 starts.

Meanwhile, Welcoat coach Leo Austria will call the shots for the Imports team that will play the Philippine squad in an exhibition game on May 8 also at the Big Dome in Cubao.

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 80—Varem 26, Arigo 14, Peek 12, Cabagnot 10, Tolomia 7, Calimag 6, Duremdes 4, Avenido 1, Yeo 0, Antonio 0.

PUREFOODS 77—Simon 22, J. Yap 20, R. Yap 9, Artadi 8, Yee 6, Evangelista 4, Salvador 2, Limpo 2, Castillo 2, Camaso 2, Gamboa 0.

Quarters: 18-17, 45-42, 63-60, 80-77

Second Game

TALK 'N TEXT 127—Sullinger 35, Cardona 27, De Ocampo 25, Washington 9, Carey 8, Billones 8, Santos 4, Belano 4, Noble 3, Aldave 2, Pablo 2, Fran 0.

RED BULL 100—Penny 27, Fonacier 14, Najorda 12, Sharma 10, Alvarez 9, Bagulo 9, Villanueva 8, Valenzuela 5, Bugia 3, Cruz 3, Ybanez 0, Robinson 0, Hrabak 0.

Quarters: 26-17, 57-50, 86-77, 127-100

UE Warriors scuttle Admirals for 4th win

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST WHIPPED PHILippine Maritime Institute, 118-68, for its fourth straight win and the solo lead in Group B of the 2007 Nike Summer League basketball tournament at the FEU gym.

Kelvin Gregorio, a 6-foot-7 junior center, scattered 16 points for the Warriors of coach Dindo Pumaren.

PMI dropped to its fourth straight loss.

San Sebastian routed Philippine College of Criminology, 86-71, for its second win in Group C, while Perpetual Help Dalta System downed Polytechnic University of the Phillippines, 89-69, and improved to 2-3.

Lions maul Tigers

NCAA CHAMPION SAN BEDA RED LIONS played just hard enough to whip UAAP titlist University of Santo Tomas Growling Tigers, 103-82, last night in the featured game of the Filoil-Flying V Preseason Invitational Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

See main story on A25.

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Hotel fire victims recall close call

Facility had non-working sprinklers, no exit ladders, guest alleges

By Jeannette I. Andrade

FIRE EXITS LEADING NOWHERE. SPRINklers with no water.

The alleged sorry state of fire prevention equipment at the 19-story Great Eastern Hotel in Quezon City that was hit by a fire Thursday night was what could have prompted Department of the Interior and Local Government Ilocos Sur provincial director Rodolfo Villoria, the lone fatality, and several persons to scale the eastside of the towering establishment, using an improvised rope of blankets and curtains tied together.

Villoria, 50, who was billeted on the 14th floor, apparently slipped from his grip on the rope when he reached the 8th floor, and came crashing down to the ground. He succumbed to multiple fractures sustained from the fall.

Trapped

DILG provincial director for Surigao del Sur Juliana Gayramon, who is confined in the hospital for a fracture and a dislocated pelvic bone, told the INQUIRER that she and other hotel guests, most of whom were DILG officials, were trapped in the upper floors of the burning hotel for an hour. Arrows directed them to fire exits, but there were no ladders they could use, she said.

"The sprinklers did not work," Gayramon recalled, adding that although there were fire extinguishers, the blaze overpowered the equipment. Hotel officials had insisted earlier that they had just tested the sprinklers, and that these were working, referring to recent tests made at the hotel's new annex.

"As matter of fact, before the sprinklers are tested by the fire department, a certification on the sprinklers' condition and its manufacturer is made," said Quezon City fire marshall Supt. Oscar Villegas.

Tested

"He (Villegas) is going to formally test it (sprinkler). It has been tested by the people in charge of its maintenance, and the management has tested it as well," said Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, who has been monitoring the investigation on the incident. The cause of the fire is still unclear.

Gayramon said she and 20 others were trapped at the 12th floor where they could see flames leaping from the west wing of the hotel. "I saw people using a hose as an improvised rope to get down," she recalled.

DILG officials from different parts of the country were billeted at the hotel for their annual seminar. They had just concluded a conference at the eighth floor when the fire started at around 7:49 pm.

Gayramon and her roommate, also from the DILG, were alerted about the fire by a colleague.

The pair decided to stay on their floor after Gayramon found it painful to walk any further.

"Two hotel employees kept advising us to keep calm, saying the fire was under control. They tried to lead us out of the burning building but they could also not find a way out. They led us to the fire exit at the south side, but we could not get down because there was no ladder," she said. Hotel personnel reportedly broke two windows to allow the people trapped in the building to breathe.

Firefighters finally found the hotel guests huddled together—after attempting to escape several times—at the east wing of the 12th floor. "The firefighters had to carry me because I could not walk anymore. I was afraid I would be left behind if I tried to walk," Gayramon said.

She was brought to the Capitol Medical Center and was later transferred to another hospital for treatment.

Apart from Gayramon, another DILG official, provincial director for Ilocos Norte Mario Elpidio Ratuita, sustained minor injuries, but has been discharged from the hospital.

4 workers die in Caloocan factory fire

By Nancy C. Carvajal

FOUR FACTORY WORKERS WERE KILLED when a fire of still unknown origin razed a three-story building in Caloocan City before dawn yesterday.

Fire officer SFO1 Arwin David said the charred bodies of the victims, who were identified as Rey Anahaw, Edward Montano, Beatriz Manago, and Aldose Uriel, were found near the stairway leading to the ground floor.

"The victims could be headed to the stairs, but obviously did not make it," David told the INQUIRER. Burned bundles of cloths and tags were scattered near the area where the charred remains of the factory workers were discovered, David said.

"We are still checking if the fire started on the second floor, where the bodies were also found, and what could have caused it, he said. He added that no one heard any explosion prior to the fire.

The fire officer said the building, located at 92 Nadurata St near 7th Avenue, Grace Park in Caloocan City, was owned by Eliza Go.

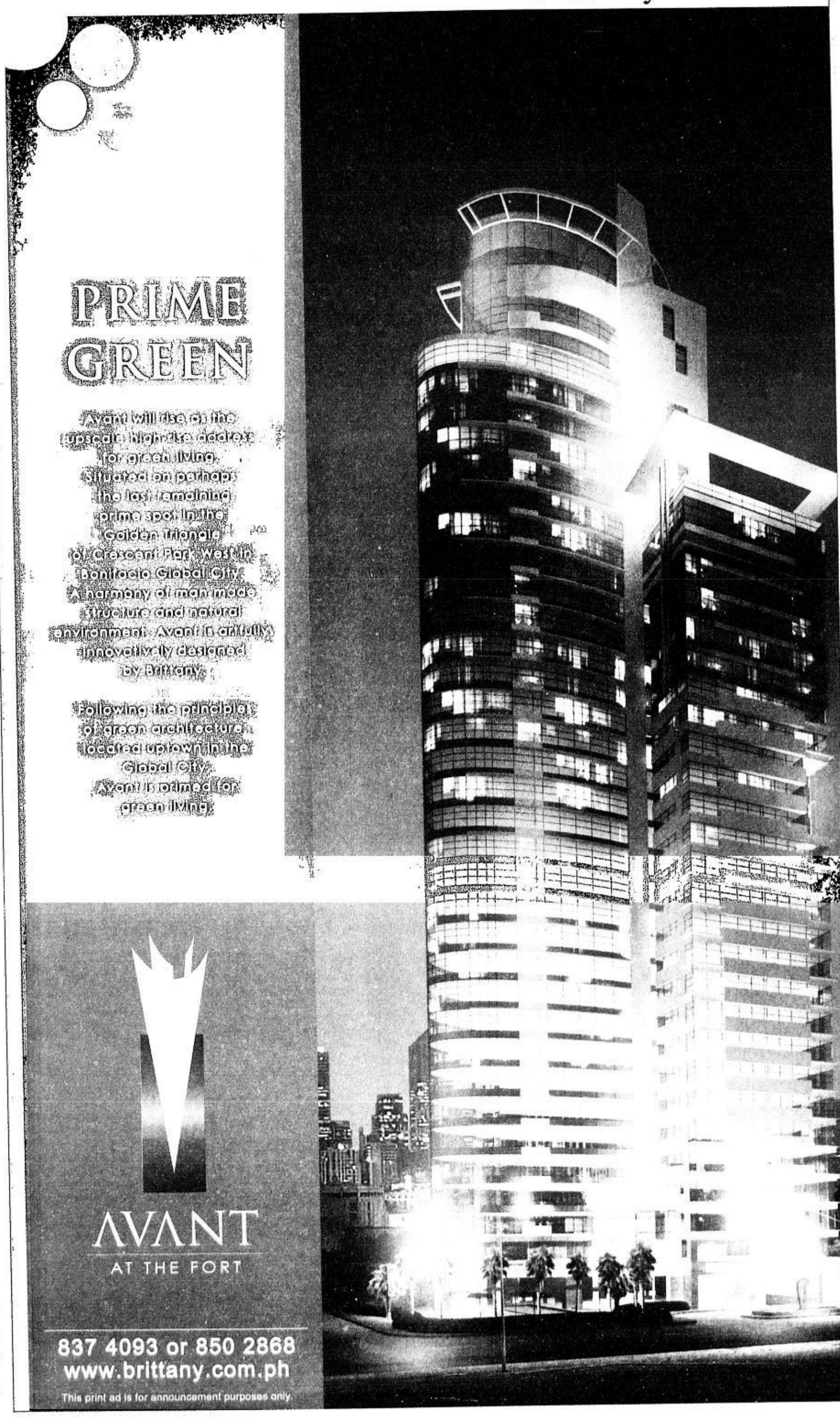
David said the victims were all live-in workers of LSR garments factory located at the rear part of the second and third floor of the building.

Go and her family, who lived in the front part of the building's second floor, were not hurt. Other occupants of the second and third floors managed to escape unhurt.

Apart from the main entrance of the building, there was no other way out, David said. The building did not have any fire exit and also had grilled windows.

Damage caused by the two-hour fire was estimated at P20 million.

Brittany BEAUTIFUL



PCU students renew protest action vs president

By Allison W. Lopez

AROUND 200 FACULTY members, staff and students of the Philippine Christian University (PCU) staged an overnight protest yesterday against their president's supposed inaction on issues of alleged corruption and mismanagement.

Ellen Naluz, a grade-school guidance counselor and the group's designated spokesperson, told the INQUIRER that they would hold the "community action" until PCU president, Rev. Dr. Oscar de Suarez, decides to answer the accusations point-by-point.

"He has not shown himself to us and neither has the board of trustees," she said, adding that the group was also calling for Suarez's removal.

Naluz said some slept on the school's cement grounds while others squeezed inside the Union Theological Seminary (UTS) room using chairs and tables as beds. Others, including those from the Dasmariñas, Cavite campus, who were not allowed inside, sat on chairs outside the gates.

Naluz emphasized that their "community action" was "not a labor strike" as teachers still held summer classes.

"We have no banners, we don't use megaphones. We just pray while waiting for their response," she said. The group held its first community action on last Oct. 19-20. Suarez countered with an illegal strike charge against the group.

Naluz revealed that the school community had become "so demoralized" with alleged graft issues, which were compounded by the recent one-year suspension from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

"He just kept quiet. Even the ones responsible for what the NCAA found have not been sanctioned," she said.

Among the unresolved matters which the group brought to the Manila Regional Trial Court, were a P32M bank loan purportedly transferred to Terra Nova Trading Corporation owned by Suarez's wife Marlene; an P82M payment from National Power Corporation to the school for an expropriated property, half of which "went to the broker;" and a P2.5M budget for an educational grant budget that "did not materialize."

Suarez had claimed the P32M loan was "authorized" by the board as an investment, in an October 2006 interview with the INQUIRER.

"When Pastor Suarez first sat as president in 2000, the cash balance was P260M; in 2004, it was down to P76M. We haven't checked the audit for 2005-2006, but who knows it might be negative already," said Naluz, who said she feared an impending school shutdown.

Enrollment, she added, had been on the decline—the Taft and Dasma campuses have about 5,000 students each, when years ago, Naluz said it reached more than 10,000.

The INQUIRER tried to speak twice with Dr. Greg de Lara, vice president for academic affairs, but school guards said he was "in a meeting." Suarez was not in his office.

"He won't show up until we're here. We're open to dialogue, but from what we've learned, he's telling us 'see you in court' again," Naluz said.

METROBRIEFS

Hotel vows review

THE Richmonde Hotel Manila promised to review its confidentiality provisions after the family of a woman who attempted suicide inside the hotel threatened to sue the establishment for denying them entry. In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, Richmonde Hotel communications manager Anne R. Dioso said they regretted the incident and hoped the family had resolved issues that allegedly led 32-year old Sheryll Teppang to check in at the hotel on April 30 to kill herself. Dioso explained that they prevented Teppang's sister, Elaine Songsong, and other relatives from entering her room on their client's request. "The hotel simply heeded one of its guest wishes to remain undisturbed," Dioso said. There was no malicious intent on part of the hotel in preventing Sheryll's relatives from going to her room, Dioso added. The hotel official explained that it is a standard practice in the hotel industry to follow the guests' requests. However, in the light of the incident, Dioso said they would review the hotel's confidentiality provisions in similar cases.

Kristine L. Alave

Hessel memorial

ELLINWOOD Malate Church (EMC) will hold a memorial and thanksgiving service for Rev. Dr. Eugene Hessel on Sunday, 11 a.m., at the EMC Sanctuary, Dr. A. Vasquez St., Malate, Manila. Hessel, a former administrative pastor of the EMC, joined his Creator on April 27 in Pasadena, California. Eulogies will be read by International Rice Research Institute deputy director general Dr. William Padolina, Rev. Dario Alampay and Angel Aguilar, former EMC pastor and elder, respectively.

ELEKSYON 2007

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DANILO LACUNA REM ZAMORA

Manila candidates have age gap

By Allison W. Lopez

DOES AGE REALLY MATTER?

In the Manila mayoral elections, age has become an issue as a youthful Arnold "Ali" Atienza faces veterans Sen. Alfredo Lim and vice mayor Danilo "Danny" Lacuna.

Widely considered the top three contenders in the battle for mayor, Atienza, Lim and Lacuna have an "age gap."

But Atienza, the 34-year-old son of outgoing mayor Lito Atienza, said he had an edge over his rivals because of his youth.

"For you to go around the city, you need energy and youth. Being young is never a liability. It creates a whole new opportunity. And voters are getting younger," he said. He pointed out that 65-70 percent of Manila's voters were aged 35 and below.

Though inexperienced in actual governance, Atienza said he had worked quietly for eight years in the City Hall as Manila Sports Council chair. A former taekwondo champ, he promoted sports among the youth and initiated projects like the Manila marathon.

"In 1998 I also spearheaded the computerization of City Hall. I'm a very technical person," said Atienza, a BS Physics graduate, major in computer applications, of De La Salle University.

The outgoing mayor's fifth child said he would "accelerate" the implementation of his father's "Buhayin ang Maynila" program that focused on infrastructure development.

Atienza has been criticized for being his father's "copycat," even dressing up in the mayor's signature Hawaiian shirts. The candidate said the label did not bother him.

"I've always looked up to my father. I've always tried to copy him, he's my role model. I've always been proud of him," he said. In fact, he said the first thing he would do as mayor was to appoint his father as senior adviser.

But Lacuna said it was time the city is run by a new manager. "I have experience and knowledge, unlike Ali," said Lacuna, who is now on his 26th year of service in Manila. The 69-year-old, who started as councilor, has been unbeatable as vice mayoral candidate.

"I hope to make it. I'm very much ready. In 1992, I ran without funding, now I have a little more. I think I'm the only candidate with a program," said Lacuna who plans to create Manila's own "cyberzone" to attract the growing call center industry. He first ran for mayor in 1992 but lost to Lim. His selling point, he added, would be the "all-purpose" Yellow Card for Manileños to be used for medical assistance and transactions at City Hall.

Lacuna also promised to help policemen and teachers by providing free dormitories to public servants, like what they have in Hong Kong.

Lim, 77, a former Manila police chief and mayor of the city, admitted that some policemen "succumb to temptation. You give them authority, you give them guns. Even if policemen and teachers are national employees, I gave them a monthly P1,000 allowance," he said, citing one of his projects during his six years as mayor.

The candidate who held the most prominent positions in government, the senator, who was once director of the National Bureau of Investigation, is known as "Dirty Harry" for his tough stance in dealing with criminals.

Age has not softened his resolve to clear the city of bad elements as he vows to restore peace and order in Manila. If he loses in the local elections, he can return to the Senate.

"The reason I'm running is because I'm going to win, not because I have a fallback. If the law states I can return, I will. If it says otherwise, then I won't. We uphold the rule of law," he said.

Bernabe to open new school

STUDENTS OF PARAÑAQUE CITY will no longer have to travel to adjacent cities to study.

Mayor Florencio Bernabe, Jr., who is running for reelection, is set to open Sun Valley High School, bringing to four the total of new school facilities built and opened in his first 3 years in office.

In 2005 alone, the Parañaque City government opened two new schools which meant an additional 50 new classrooms and 91 new teachers for 4,518 students.

The 4-story F. Serrano Elementary School in Sun Valley has 28 classrooms and can accommodate 2,500 students. Currently, 1,933 students are enrolled.

Don Arcadio Santos High School in Moonwalk has 17 classrooms with 1,914 enrollees.

In 2006, Rogelio Gatchalian Elementary School in Barangay Vitalez opened its doors to students. It now has 671 enrollees.

"These new school buildings will go a long way to address our classroom shortage" said Bernabe, who has put education at the forefront of his projects.

Apart from the school buildings, Parañaque also has a new 4-story hospital building. A modern Parañaque City Jail was also completed in March this year which is regarded as the newest and most complete jail facility in the Philippines.

Also in the pipeline is a new Parañaque Police Headquarters which will soon be built in the coastal reclamation area and a new Parañaque Central Fire Station.

2 women shot in Marikina

By Kristine L. Alave

TWO SUPPORTERS OF MARIKINA City Rep. Del de Guzman, who is seeking reelection, were gunned down by an unidentified man yesterday morning, prompting city police chief Supt. Sotero Ramos to beef up the city's security program.

Mila Andrade, 49, and Rosita Tubise, 46, with three others were walking along Farmers 1 Avenue in Brgy. Tumana at about 7:30 a.m. when an unidentified male on board a motorcycle fired at them.

Andrade had gunshot wounds on her stomach and left cheek while Tubise was wounded in the right knee. Police have yet to determine the motive and identity of the gunman.

Treasured memories

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE TAPPING OF THE PHONE LINE at the residence of former President Cory Aquino and the abduction of the son of Joe Burgos, an icon of press freedom during martial law days, are indications we're not living under normal times.

This government is a dictatorship masquerading as a democracy.

During the unlamented martial law days, at least people knew that times were not normal. If phones of opposition leaders were bugged or some people were abducted, the citizenry knew that the country was living under a climate of suppression, repression and fear.

But democracy was supposed to have been restored 21 years ago after Edsa I.

But why is the government violating human rights with impunity now?

The answer is indifference and apathy on the part of the citizenry. Filipinos are slow to anger; it takes them a long time to reach the boiling point.

Marcos knew that. President Macapagal-Arroyo knows that.

***

A typical Pinoy reaction to abuses in his midst is that as long as he or members of his immediate family are not affected, everything's fine by him.

I've noticed this in my years as a host of a radio-TV public service show that helped oppressed people find justice. My staff and I, for example, would ask witnesses to testify against say, a drunken cop who beat up a young boy, and all we would get was a blank stare.

"Why should we get involved? The victim is not our relative," said one man I asked to become a court witness to the killing of a neighbor.

Unless Filipinos stand up to abuses by those in power, Marcos will not be the last dictator.

***

Bugging the phones of citizens and forced disappearances were not only done during the Marcos and Arroyo regimes.

They were also done during the administration of President Erap.

Erap's alleged No. 1 bugger was his Philippine National Police chief, Panfilo Lacson.

Lacson reportedly bugged the phones of journalists and political enemies of Erap.

Remember the disappearance of publicist Bubby Dacer and his driver?

So, what else is new?

***

I accept the proffered hand of reconciliation of my former friend, Jose Miguel Arroyo, who has decided to drop all the libel cases he filed against scores of journalists, including myself.

I knew the President's husband would come to his senses, if not sooner then later. I know him well enough.

I knew that Mr Arroyo filed those libel cases upon the prodding of his *mga pulpol na abogado* and sycophants in his inner circle.

Mike, I miss those days when we had weekly dinners and a few drinks after. And the men talk that lasted well into the night. And the lunches or dinners with the President in Malacañang. And the lunches and dinners at an Italian restaurant in San Francisco, California.

I know those days will never come back, but they have become part of my treasured memories.

Mercury's spin reveals molten, not solid core

CHICAGO—USING A FANCY VERSION OF A common chef's trick, scientists have discovered that Mercury's core may be partially molten, making it a little more Earth-like than once thought.

Chefs can tell whether an egg is hard-boiled or raw by spinning it on a countertop. A raw egg will wobble.

So apparently does Mercury.

"Essentially, our radar observations have shown that the innermost planet Mercury has a molten core," said Cornell University's Jean-Luc Margot, who led the research published in the journal Science on Thursday.

Using radar and telescopes, Margot's team measured the spin rate of Mercury and discovered that it wobbles too much to have a solid core.

"That is a surprise in the sense that Mercury is so small that most researchers had expected it to have cooled off and solidified by now. The molten core indicates otherwise," Margot said in a telephone interview.

For a long time, scientists had thought Mercury's core was made of solid iron. But Nasa's Mariner 10 mission in 1974 discovered that the planet has a weak magnetic field, something that may be associated with a molten core.

That stirred up a decades-long debate about Mercury's core.

Margot said the idea of measuring Mercury's spin to determine the composition of its core was proposed years ago.

But it was thought to be too difficult to get the precise measurements needed.

"Nobody expected you could do this from the ground," he said.

"It was thought that the oscillations would be so small they would not be detected until you had an actual lander on the surface to measure that." Margot and colleagues devised a way to get around that using a strategy he compares to following points of light bouncing off a spinning disco ball.

Instead of light, the team used powerful radio waves and measured the time it took them to bounce off Mercury and travel between two ground-based radio telescopes in the United States—one in California and one in West Virginia. The time between the two points would be a measure of Mercury's spin.

The strategy involved 21 precisely timed measurements because Earth and Mercury are only in the needed alignment for periods of 20 seconds at a time. *Reuters*

Climate change agreement reached

BANGKOK—CLIMATE CHANGE EXperts agreed Friday on measures the world can take to combat global warming, following intense debate and marathon negotiations at a crucial UN conference here, a French delegate said.

Scientists and other leading authorities from 120 nations finally achieved a consensus after an exhausting session that lasted from Thursday morning until 4:30 a.m. on Friday, French delegation chief Marc Gillet told AFP.

"It is over. The report has been accepted. The formal adoption will take place in the morning," Gillet said, adding the delegates would reconvene at 10 a.m. (0200 GMT) to give the final stamp of approval.

The delegates, from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, were scheduled to wrap up on Thursday night but a few key sticking points and the sheer complexity of the document put the event into overtime, delegates said.

"We are so tired, so we are going to finish things in the morning," another delegate from a European nation told AFP.

One sticking point subject to debate until the end was a push by China to highlight that the rich world was responsible for the vast bulk of greenhouse gasses that cause global warming, the European delegate said.

Another point of dispute was how much importance to give nuclear energy in the mix of new technologies that the world should depend upon as it moves away from fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases, he said.

The report is the third and last from the IPCC this year, after the first two looked into the evidence and looming devastating impacts of global warming.

It is scheduled to be released to the public at a press conference here at 1 p.m.

Although details of the final report were not immediately available, it is widely expected to warn that world leaders have little time to waste in tackling climate change.

However, it will also emphasize that the tools for reducing greenhouse gas emissions already exist and many can be quickly implemented.

A draft summary of the IPCC report seen by AFP calls for a greater use of renewable energies such as solar, wind, and hydro-power, as well as ways to use energy more efficiently.

Storing carbon dioxide, the biggest greenhouse gas, underground is also under consideration, as are tariffs and other economic mechanisms to make using fossil fuels more expensive and renewable energies much cheaper.

Nevertheless, there was fierce debate at the IPCC meeting this week, which began on Monday, and it was not immediately clear as to what had been changed from the draft summary.

The costs of reducing greenhouse gasses that cause global warming was one of the biggest sticking points this week, delegates said previously.

Various delegates contacted by AFP said China has been the leading voice in expressing concern about the costs of cutting back.

It sought more than 10 amendments to the draft report, saying it will cost more and be harder to reduce emissions than detailed in the early draft, according to documents submitted to the IPCC and seen by AFP.

A top priority in tackling climate change is how to cut the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which are measured in parts per million (ppm). Today's levels are close to 400 ppm.

The draft of the report says that if the world wants to stabilize carbon dioxide levels at 640 ppm by 2030, it would cost 0.2 percent of average global gross domestic product (GDP) in that year. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Chavez threatens banks' takeover

CARACAS—President Hugo Chavez threatened to take over Venezuela's private banks and its largest steelmaker on Thursday, raising the prospect of a widened nationalization drive by the leftist leader. After taking over utility companies earlier this year and seizing control of the last privately run oil operations in the OPEC nation only two days ago, Chavez suddenly opened new potential fronts for nationalization. But in the cases of the banks and the steelmaker Ternium-Sidor, Chavez made his threats conditional, saying they could avoid takeover if they adapted their businesses to better take into account what he calls the national interest. *Reuters*

Top al-Qaida operative killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—The US military said on Thursday it had killed a top al-Qaida operative in Iraq whom it accused of involvement in the kidnapping of American journalist Jill Carroll, peace activist Tom Fox and other foreigners. US military spokesperson Maj. Gen. William Caldwell said Muharib Abdul Latif al-Jubouri was the "senior minister of information" for al-Qaida in Iraq. Interior Ministry spokesperson Brig. Gen. Abdul-Kareem Khalaf said Jubouri was also Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the leader of the self-styled Islamic State in Iraq, a Qaida-led group which has claimed many major attacks in the country. *Reuters*

20 foreigners kidnapped in Nigeria

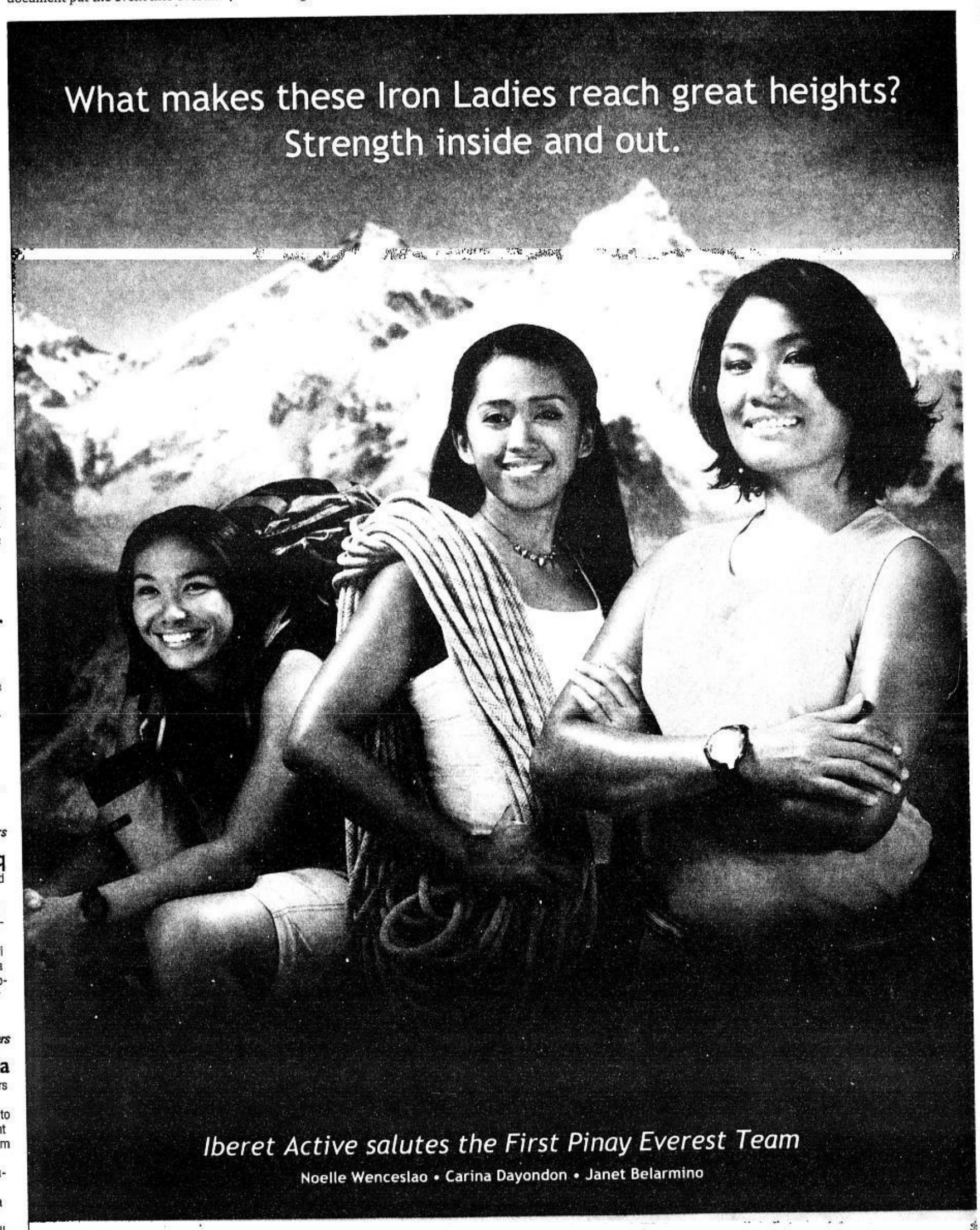
LAGOS—Armed men abducted at least 20 foreigners in three separate incidents in southern Nigeria overnight to Thursday in the latest spate of violence to hit Africa's biggest oil producer. On Wednesday night an unemployed Dutch oil worker was kidnapped from a bar in the southern town of Warri in the oil-rich Delta state. Then early Thursday three Korean executives and eight Filipino workers were seized from a construction site in Rivers state after a gunfight. In a third incident, gunmen kidnapped eight foreigners working on a floating storage vessel operated by ENI of Italy and Single Buoy Moorings, the Mystras, anchored 90 km off the Rivers coast, only to announce hours later that they had released them. *AFP*

16 suspected Iraqi rebels detained

BAGHDAD—US forces detained 16 suspected Iraqi insurgents with links to Iran during a raid in a Shiite stronghold in Baghdad on Friday, the US military said. A weapons cache which included Iranian rockets was also found in a separate operation south of the capital, it said. The military said the raid in Baghdad's Sadr City targeted suspected members of a cell known for facilitating the transport of sophisticated bombs, known as explosively formed penetrators, or EFPs, from Iran. They were also suspected of moving militants from Iraq to Iran for training, it said. *Reuters*

Turkey sets snap elections

ANKARA—Turkey's parliament approved on Thursday a ruling party call for an early general election in a bid to end a damaging crisis over attempts to elect a former Islamist as president. The proposal to hold early polls on July 22 was approved by all 458 lawmakers present in the 550-seat parliament, where Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) has 351 seats. The opposition also backed the proposal to bring the elections forwards from Nov. 4. *AFP*



The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Olmert defiant despite protests, won't quit

JERUSALEM—BATTERED ISRAELI PRIME MINister Ehud Olmert remained defiant on Friday after a mass rally called on him to quit over his failure in the Lebanon war, but the next few weeks are seen key to whether the master politician can hang on to power.

"The prime minister does not intend to resign," Olmert spokesperson Miri Eisin told AFP. "The prime minister listens attentively to everything that happens and is trying to react in the best interests of the State of Israel." Late Thursday between 150,000 and 200,000 people, according to estimates by police and organizers, gathered in Tel Aviv calling on Olmert to resign in the wake of a government inquiry that roasted his leadership last summer's war.

The rally—the first mass protest since a preliminary version of the report was published on Monday—drew activists from both left and right and upped the enormous pressure on Olmert to resign.

Olmert has admitted to errors in handling the war, but has said stepping down would be irresponsible and vowed to correct the mistakes uncovered by the interim report.

"I am personally not in the most comfortable position," he told lawmakers from his Kadima party this week. "But I am past the age of 60 and I've seen a lot of things in my life and I've learned not to run away from responsibility." Already weakened by a string of scandals and with two-thirds of Israelis wanting him to go, the man often called Israel's best politician has so far managed to overcome the several challenges that arose after the report.

He doused a mutiny within the centrist Kadima, despite a call by a senior aide and former close ally, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, for him to step down.

He has also managed so far to keep the support of his 78-member coalition in the 120-seat Knesset.

"Contrary to expectations and assessments, Olmert is ending this week on his feet—wounded, bleeding, battered and bruised, but breathing. For now," wrote the tabloid Maariv.

But observers warn that the next few weeks will be crucial as to whether he will be able to cling on to the post he won less than a year ago after leading Kadima to a narrow victory in its first parliamentary poll.

"Make no mistake: Olmert's chances of surviving in the medium or long range are weak to zero," Maariv wrote.

Olmert still faces trouble on several fronts—his party, his coalition, the numerous corruption investigations against him and the final report by the Winograd Commission on the Lebanon war due out in less than three months.

Although he quashed a Kadima rebellion this week, he still faces a possible revolt. Many want him to step aside so as not to sink a party that is already down in the polls.

Kadima cannot oust Olmert, as the charter of the party set up by former premier Ariel Sharon has no such provision. However, Olmert would have no choice but to quit if a majority of its 29 lawmakers abandon him.

And the Labor party, Kadima's main partner, is considering abandoning the coalition. Such a move that would leave Olmert without the required majority in parliament and pave the way for opposition Likud chief Benjamin Netanyahu to try to form one, observers say.

Labor's central committee is due to discuss the matter at a meeting on May 13. *AFP*

TENS OF THOUSANDS of Israeli protesters stream to Rabin Square in Tel Aviv on Thursday, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. AP

PERFORMANCE, SAFETY, STYLE

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Standard DOHC V6 Power and Available Four-Wheel-Drive Traction

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All Grand Vitara models feature a new, lightweight yet rigid unibody construction enhanced with a built-in ladder frame to offer the best of both worlds - a refined on-road ride and the rugged off-road performance expected from Suzuki SUVs. The structure is teamed with four-wheel independent suspension - MacPherson struts in front and a multi-link design in the rear - to provide precise handling both on-road and off-road. The Grand Vitara also features large, vented front disc brakes and rear drum brakes and power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering.

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Every Grand Vitara model is fitted with active safety features, including ABS with electronic brake-force distribution (EBD) and Electronic Stability Program (ESP)1, including traction control. The ESP uses a variety of electronic sensors to measure vehicle speed, steering wheel angle and yaw. This information is sent to a central controller that can intervene as needed. Under certain conditions, such as when unintended oversteer or understeer is detected, the system can apply individual brakes and reduce engine torque to help the driver maintain the proper cornering line.

Together with the traction control system, the ESP helps ensure vehicle stability and optimum cornering, handling in take off or acceleration, emergency maneuvers, or driving on slippery road surfaces.

The Grand Vitara also features six airbags as standard equipment - driver and front passenger seat-mounted side-impact airbags supplemental restraint system (SRS), advanced dual-stage front airbag SRS, advanced weight-sensing front passenger airbag SRS and front and rear side-curtain airbags.

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

Harbour eyes PBL solo lead

MOST COACHES WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE his team on a four-game roll. Not Harbour Centre mentor Jorge Gallent.

Gallent remains unsatisfied with his wards as defending champion Harbour Centre shoot for the solo lead versus a surging Toyota Balintawak at the end of the first round of the PBL Unity Cup today at The Arena in San Juan.

"We tend to relax when we have a big lead, we have to fix that," noted Gallent.

Road Kings coach Ariel Vanguardia, on the other hand, has been trying to figure out how to shackle Batang Pier stars Jason Castro, JC Intal, Chico Lanete and Ryan Araña.

"It's always tough playing Harbour," said Vanguardia. "They're fully loaded so we just have to continue striving harder in practice."

San Miguel-Magnolia tries to cap its first-round campaign with a second straight victory against Henkel Sista at 2 p.m.

Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala and Dazz 'Sang Patak close out the triple-header at 4 p.m.

Harbour Centre secured the solo lead at 4-1 after San Miguel-Magnolia stunned Burger King, 95-92, in overtime last Thursday.

The Whoppers slipped to second at 4-2, while Toyota Balintawak and Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala shared third spot at 3-2.

STANDINGS	W	L
Harbour	4	1
Burger King	4	2
Toyota Bal.	3	2
Cebuana L.	3	2
Magnolia	2	3
Dazz	1	4
Henkel Sista	1	4

GAMES TODAY (*The Arena, San Juan*)
12 noon—Toyota Balintawak vs Harbour
2 p.m.—San Miguel-Magnolia vs Henkel Sista
4 p.m.—Dazz vs CL-Pera Padala

Interestingly, Harbour Centre and Toyota Balintawak have emerged as bitter rivals in the last two conferences.

Last year, Batang Pier rose from a 1-2 deficit in their best-of-five Finals against the Road Kings to bag the championship in the Unity Cup.

The following conference, Batang Pier pulled off another come-from-behind victory versus the Road Kings in the semifinals and marched on to clinch the Silver Cup title.

"I expect another thrilling encounter," said Gallent.

Magnolia coach Koy Banal also expects better performances from the Super Sealers, who ended a skid with a 78-73 win against Dazz' Sang Patak. *Jasmine W. Payo and Marc Reyes*

Bombers make threat known, trip Cardinals

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ARMED WITH TWO OF THE MOST ELECTRIFYING guards in the tournament, Jose Rizal University has already started saber-rattling for the coming collegiate season.

Marvin Hayes and John Marion Wilson threw the knockout punches for the Heavy Bombers, who floored the Cardinals of Mapua, 71-63, yesterday in the Filoil Flying V preseason invitational cup at The Arena in San Juan.

Hayes scored a game-high 18 points, including 12 in a telling run that spanned the second and third quarters that left the Cards gasping for breath.

From 17-16 after the first 10 minutes, Hayes and Wilson exploded with clutch baskets to zoom to a 58-48 lead going into the final period.

Hayes, an incoming junior for the Heavies, and sophomore Wilson are expected to lead the squad in the 83rd season of the NCAA which the school is hosting and their performance here is slowly making other member schools of the country's oldest league take notice.

Hermes Sumalinog, Sean Co and Gil Guillermo tried to stage a rally for Mapua and they managed to bring the Cardinals to within 65-70, but Wilson spoiled it all by stringing up seven points in the endgame.

Sumalinog, Co and Guillermo all finished with 11 points for the Cards, while Jerby del Rosario contributed 10.

In the second game, Philippine Christian University employed a third-quarter blitz to down University of the Philippines, 85-76.

Navarro paced the Dolphins with 20 markers, while Amparado had 15 and Marlon Gomez got 10. Veejay Serios led the Maroons with 14 points.

The scores:

First Game

JRU 71—Hayes 18, Wilson 12, Cunanan 9, Se 6, Lituania 4, Pradas 4, Agas 3, Cruz 2, Nocom 2, Bungahis 0, Kabigting 0, Montemayor 0.

MAPUA 63—Sumalinog 11, Co, 11, Guillermo 11, Del Rosario 10, Dela Peña 6, Pascual 5, Mazo 4, Banal 3, Acosta 2, Cinco 0, Palomque 0.

Quarters: 17-16, 33-23, 58-45, 71-63

Second Game

PCU 85—Navarro 20, Amparado 15, Gomez 10, Manalili 9, McCoy 8, Boliver 8, Busa 5, Santos 5, Chien 4, Siruma 1, Somera 0.

UP 76—Serios 14, Agbayani 10, De Asis 8, Gamboa 7, Rivera 6, Yulo 5, Rosales 5, Lozano 3, Sison 2, Reyes 2, Wong 2, Hipolito 0, Dela Victoria 0.

Quarters: 17-23, 41-44, 71-63, 85-76

PCU'S Marlon Gomez battles for position against UP's Scooter Rivera. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Knockout pushes Valero closer to Pacquiao fight

By Roy Luarca

ANOTHER KNOCKOUT, ANOTHER STEP closer for Edwin Valero to a fight against Manny Pacquiao.

The unbeaten Valero claimed Japanese Nobahito Honmo as his 22nd straight knockout victim in Tokyo Wednesday night, boosting the Venezuelan's bid to challenge the Filipino ring superstar next year.

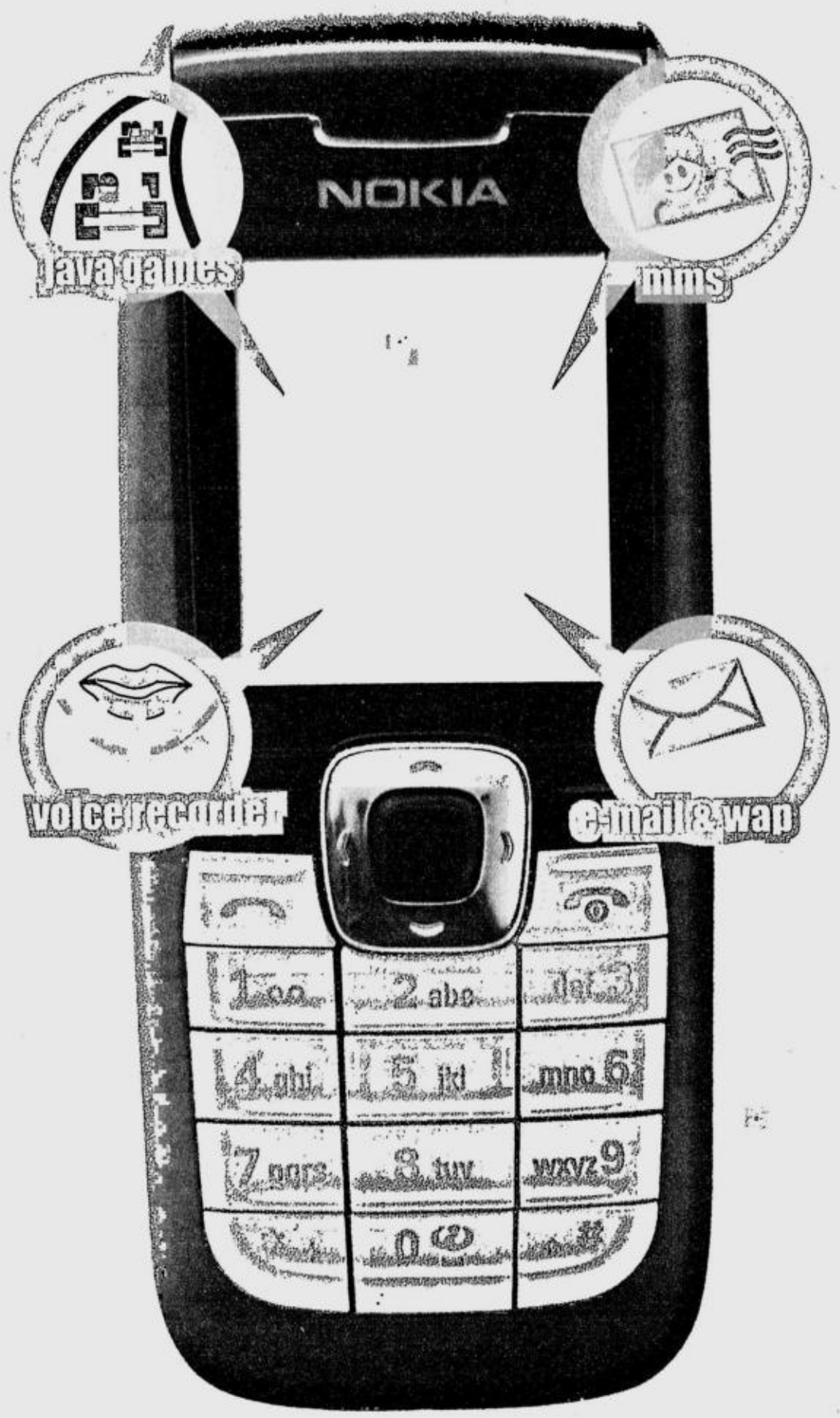
Despite the WBA super featherweight champion's fearsome record, Valero's Japanese handler Akihiko Honda has said his ward is not ready to do battle with Pacquiao within the year.

Not with the way the 25-year-old Valero took eight rounds to stop Honmo, owner of a 29-4-2 with only 5 KOs, due to excessive bleeding from lacerations.

Valero, a southpaw like Pacquiao, was more impressive when he demolished Mexican Michael Lozada in just 72 seconds in January.

Last year, Pacquiao and the Tokyo-based Valero figured in a "word war" when the Filipino WBC International super featherweight titlist labeled the Venezuelan's victims as "tricycle drivers."

Valero got back by calling Pacquiao a cab driver. Valero is far behind in the queue of fighters angling to do battle with Pacquiao.



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Class B—Boys: 434 W. Superal, 450 M. Puyat, 455 E. Kishida; **Girls:** 480 A De Villa, 500 M. Woo, 504 S. Ababa
Class C—Boys: 444 M. Tabuena, 448 B. dela Paz, 458 R. Gonzales 78; **Girls:** 451 I. Gabasa, 456 A. Unson, 485 A. Sabater, 486 M. Monsalve
Class D—Boys: 418 M. Yee, 428 AR Ramos, 473 M. Arevalo, 475 J. Dy; **Girls:** 473 P. Superal, 482 D. Uy, 546 R Vasandani
Class E—Boys: 358 L. Uy, 395 R. Monsalve, 411 S. Vasandani, 441 K. Kristofer; **Girls:** 352 M. Legaspi, 369 LK Go, 370 A. Arevalo
Class F—Boys: 478 D. Bantug, 501 A. Ballesteros, 506 P. Winsett; **Girls:** 417 B. Olivarez-Ilas, 421 K. Torralba, 431 A. Nocum

THE BIG NAMES FLEXED THEIR MIGHT in a final round as John Kier Abdon, Regina de Guzman, Wolen Superal and Miguel Tabuena cruised to victories yesterday in the Callaway Junior World qualifier at the Sherwood Hills course in Trece Martires, Cavite.

Abdon completed a big reversal in the final half of the 108-hole eliminations, shooting a 74 for a 14-shot win over Miko Yee in boys' Class A while Regina de Guzman also humbled the opposition in the girls' side with a 20-stroke victory.

Superal, a Junior World champion two years ago, assembled the round of the day, shooting five birdies and an eagle in the back nine en route to a 69 and a 16-shot win in boys' Class B.

He will have another crack at the Class B crown at the Junior World in July with a free ticket from PAL to Los Angeles like the the other 11 division winners.

Tabuena reaffirmed his status as the top player in his class with a four-shot win in boys' Class C, and Yee was virtually unchallenged in boys' Class D, prevailing by 10.

Reigning world champion Mia Legaspi posted an expected victory in girls' Class E and Angela de Villa emerged the winner in girls' Class B.

HEFTY Miggy Yee (left) gets high-fives from rivals after his big victory. ROGER MARGALLO

It was Bernice Olivarez-Ilas who pulled off the biggest win after turning back Kristine Torralba by four strokes in girls' Class F (6 and under). Torralba either held or shared the lead in the first five rounds.

Topping their divisions were David Bantug in boys' Class F, Irina Gabasa in girls' Class C, Lance Uy in boys' Class E and Princess Superal in girls' Class C.

The other sponsors supporting the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines in its annual summer circuit are PCSO, JVC, Time Zone, INQUIRER Golf, Federation of Golf Clubs and Dela Paz Trophy.

SPORTSWATCH

Karting rivalry resumes

YOUNG KARTERS FROM TUASON RACING-Ready2Race and Jet Racing resume their rivalry for top honors in the Mini-ROK and Junior ROK divisions today in the third leg of the 2007 Shell Helix Karting Super Series at the Carmona Circuit Philippines. Tuason Racing-R2R is gearing up for another big harvest behind key karters Joey Orduna and Juha Turalba who are seeking back-to-back victories in their respective classes. Orduna hopes to repeat his feat against Jet Racing's Franco Reyes as he guns for his third consecutive win in the Mini-ROK division.

PBA kids league up tomorrow

THE ANNUAL BURLINGTON-PBA BASKETBALL League gets going tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum with a record field of 15 teams seeing action in the pro league's summer offering for kids. Now on its fourth year, the tournament has two divisions. Division is for kids 9 and 10 years old while Division 2 is for players 11 and 12. "The reception this tourney has generated from parents as well as local government units is truly heartwarming," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

Small Time Derby set at PSG

THE P1.2-MILLION SMALL TIME 5-COCK DERby kicks off at the Pasig Square Garden on May 23. The four-day event, sponsored by Thunderbird Platinum and the venue's new management, features three 2-cock eliminations. The 3-cock championship is on June 2. Entry fee is 4,400. Meanwhile, the Magic Numbers Series 4 hackfest, with a guaranteed prize of P260,000 will be held Tuesday. The venue's 2-cock Ulutan is held every Sunday and Tuesday and the 2-Hit 2-Cock Ulutan every Wednesday and Saturday. For inquiries, call Ditas at 646-58-58 or 646-58-28.

58-fight LPC 3-cocker today

A FOUR-CORNERED BATTLE AMONG TOP cockers from Pasay, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa and Cavite fires off tonight at Las Piñas Coliseum through a 3-cock derby featuring 58 fights. Host Baldo Perez pegged the entry fee at P5,500. Entries must be submitted today, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. The tough cast of participants include last week's champion Jover Dilao, Angel Tenedero, Paeng Arciaga, Butchoy Olano, Eric dela Rosa, Danny Alejo, MImi Itchon, Alex Tobias, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Pepe Burgos and Richard Ramos.

3 hackfests slated in Makati

THREE TOP-FLIGHT DERBIES ARE SLATED next week at the Makati Coliseum starting with the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-Cock Derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador on Monday. The PSO-SEC Class '64 5-Cock Derby, which dangles a guaranteed prize of P700,000 and backed by WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp., comes next on Wednesday. Another PCAP derby sizzles on May 12. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

PCU official raps other 'NC' execs

A RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN University senior basketball team yesterday accused some members of the National College Athletic Association of "taking advantage" of the school's suspension by raiding its junior basketball ranks.

The source said some NCAA member schools "showed no decency" in pushing for PCU's one-year suspension from the league early this month and then trying to recruit certain members of the Baby Dolphins.

"We are serving a one-year suspension which they themselves imposed (on us), and now they are trying to get our players," said the source who declined to be named.

The NCAA imposed the ban on PCU after junior basketball player JP Importante was found guilty of "identity-switching." Three of Importante's teammates are still under investigation for the same offense. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

SUBIC INT'L TRIATHLON

Top foreign bets test RP hopes

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST FEMALE racers contend for the crown today against two regional champions in the 13th Subic Bay International Triathlon.

Reigning Southeast Asian Games champion Kimberley Yap of Malaysia and 2006 Asian Aquathlon women's titleholder Mak So-ning of Hong Kong remain as the heavy favorites in the women's elite race today at the Subic Bay Freeport.

But course familiarity will be to the advantage of nationals Sandra Araullo, LC Langit and Mimi Lucas.

The men's elite competition will fire off tomorrow with national champion George Vilog and veterans Arland Macasieb and Mark Candelaria aiming for slots in the top 10.

Other foreign racers expected to dominate include New Zealand's Liam Scope, Ben Pulham, Will Green, Dylan McNiece, Tony Dodds, Martin Van Berneveld and Kelly Bruce; Australia's Clayton Fetell; Austria's Martin Jandl and Norbert Domnik; and Syria's Omar Tayara.

Close to 30 world-class athletes will compete in the two-day race which adopted the "Fies-Tri" theme to give the event a fiesta-like atmosphere, according to Triathlon Association of the Philippines president Tom Carrasco Jr.

The race will also serve as a qualifier for the national team members in the 2007 Southeast Asian Games in Thailand this December.

Foreign triathletes vying for slots in the 2008 Beijing Olympics also shoot for podium finishes to earn points from the International Triathlon Union.

Over 300 participants have signed up for the event.

These Warriors are truly golden

Golden State boots out No. 1 Dallas

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA—THE GOLDEN STATE Warriors completed a stunning first-round National Basketball Association playoff upset of Western Conference top seeds Dallas Thursday with a 111-86 game six triumph.

The Warriors, who had scraped a playoff berth on the last night of the regular season, completed a four-games-to-two series victory over a Mavericks team that won a league-leading 67 regular season games and had their sights set on returning to the NBA finals for the second straight year.

"It's so disappointing you can't even describe it," said Dallas star Dirk Nowitzki, a top contender for Most Valuable Player honors for his regular-season exploits.

"We played our heart out for six, seven months. We won 67 games, and it really means nothing at this point."

The departure of Dallas means that neither of last year's NBA finalists made it out of the first round. The Miami Heat, who defeated the Mavericks for the championship last season, fell to the Chicago Bulls in the Eastern Conference first round.

Stephen Jackson scored 33 points, including a career-high seven 3-pointers, while Baron Davis ignored a sore hamstring to collect 20 points, 10 rebounds and six assists as the Warriors became the first eighth seed to oust a No. 1 seed in a best-of-seven series.

Matt Barnes had 16 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists for Golden State, who are making their first playoff appearance since 1994.

The Warriors, who led by two points at the half, broke open the game in the third period, when they out-scored the Mavericks 36-15.

"We just had one of the worst third quarters we had all year," Dallas coach Avery Johnson said.

"Man they got on a huge run there," he said. "They got all of their shots, we got jump-shot happy in that stretch.

"We didn't penetrate as much as we should have. We couldn't get any stops. They were hurting us on the pick and rolls. They just did a good job of playing offense and defense."

GOLDEN State's Baron Davis lets the world know just exactly how he feels. AP

Davis, the star of the playoffs to this point, tweaked his hamstring early in the game. But after receiving treatment, he came back to shoot 7-of-17 from the field.

Jackson, who had been ejected twice in the series, including at the end of game five, shot 10-of-19 from the field, including a remarkable 7-of-8 from 3-point range.

Meanwhile, Nowitzki endured a nightmare game, scoring just eight points on 2-of-13 shooting.

"This series I couldn't really put my stamp on it the way I wanted to, and that's why I'm very disappointed," Nowitzki said.

Jazz tie series

In the second round, the Warriors will face the winner of the first-round series between Houston and Utah.

The Jazz staved off elimination on Thursday with a 94-82 victory over the Rockets that evened their series at three games apiece.

Carlos Boozer scored 22 points and Mehmet Okur added 14 of his 19 in the second half.

That series heads to Houston for Game 7 on Saturday.

"I was pleased with the effort that our guys put in to try and win the game," Jazz coach Jerry Sloan said.

Utah led the entire second half and took a 68-62 advantage into the final period, but two free throws by Tracy McGrady capped a 12-5 run by Houston that narrowed the deficit to 77-76 with 4:45 left. But that was as close as the Rockets came. *AFP*

GAME TODAY (Basketball TV)
8 a.m.—Toronto vs New Jersey

WARRIORS big man Andrin Biedrins waves a banner after the Warriors' 111-86 win over the Dallas Mavericks. AP

Old rival gives Oscar fresh help

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—WHEN OSCAR De La Hoya needed help training for Saturday's boxing showdown here against Floyd Mayweather, he turned to the man who inflicted two of his four defeats—"Sugar" Shane Mosley.

Mosley served as a sparring partner for De La Hoya during the Latino star's training camp at Puerto Rico and his work imitating the speed and footwork of the unbeaten Mayweather will prove vital in the epic super welterweight matchup.

"My sparring with him helped a great deal," De La Hoya said. "We have been friends since we grew up together in LA."

De La Hoya, 38-4 with 30 knockouts, lost decisions to Mosley in world title fights in 2000 and 2003. His only other defeats came in 1999 to Puerto Rican star Felix Trinidad and in 2004 to Bernard Hopkins.

Mosley and Hopkins are now partners in Golden Boy Promotions, De la Hoya's firm that is staging the Mayweather fight. Having beaten De La Hoya gave Mosley a special insight on how his new business partner can strengthen his weak spots.

"There were things I could tell him that I thought made it more difficult for me when we fought that he can probably use in the fight with Mayweather," Mosley said.

"One of the problems he might have had in his fights is that he wants to win so badly and he works out so hard that maybe he leaves a little bit in the gym and gets a little tired in the fight.

"He has figured that out and he's going to do a lot better when he fights Mayweather."

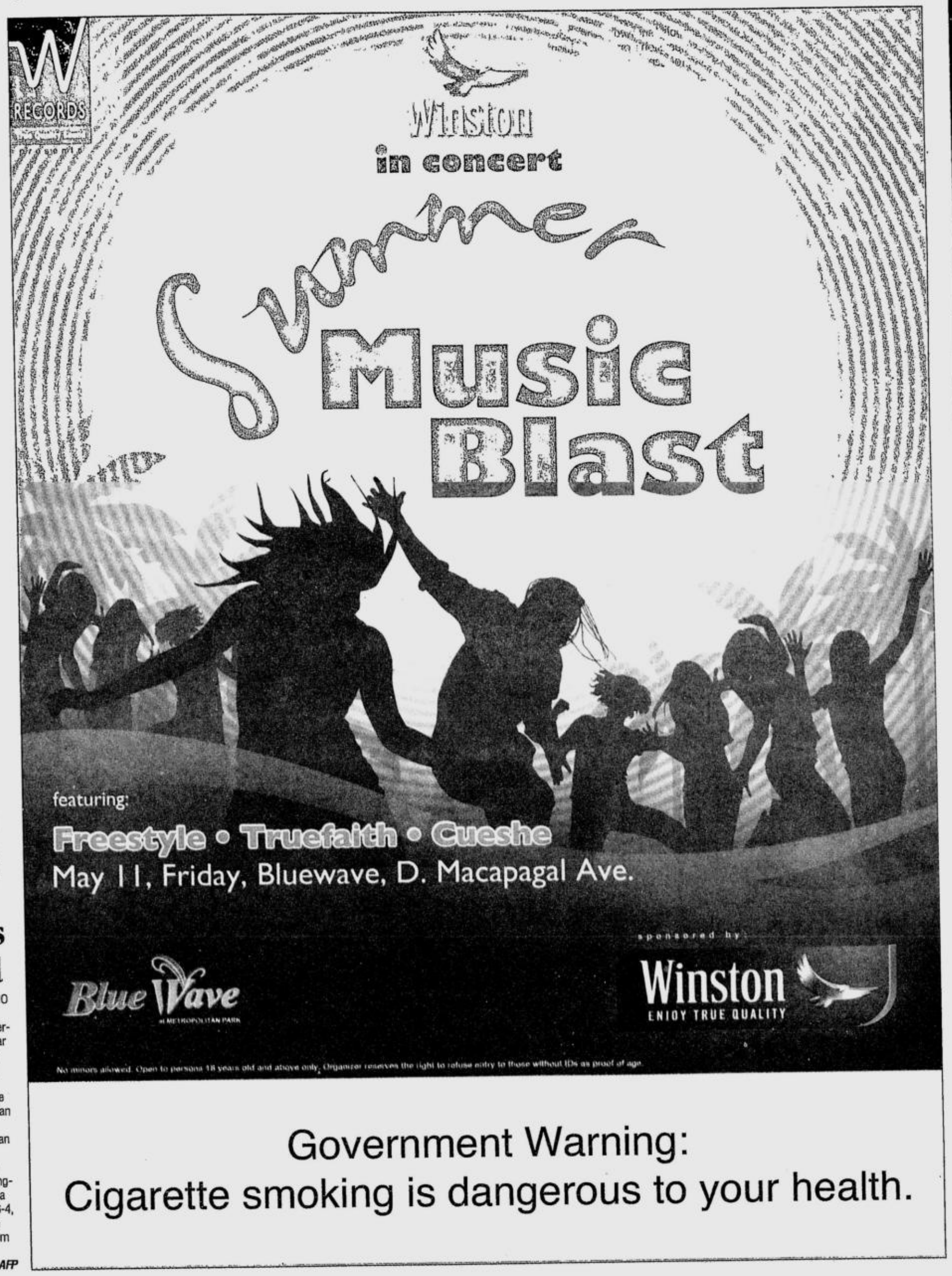
Mosley quickly said yes when De La Hoya asked for his help.

"I love to help out a friend," Mosley said. "I'm as fast as Mayweather and that's going to help him to think when he's in there with Mayweather. He's going to be ready. He'll be prepared when he gets in the ring."

Mayweather does not believe Mosley is a weapon, saying, "All that Shane Mosley has ever been is a sparring partner." *AFP*

Unbeaten fighters spice up box card

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—TWO UNBEATEN FILIPINO fighters, two undefeated Englishmen and an Australian with an unblemished record are among undercard fighters for Saturday's Floyd Mayweather-Oscar de la Hoya slugfest. Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista of the Philippines will face Argentina's Sergio Manuel Medina in a matchup of unbeaten super bantamweights. Medina is 28-0 with 16 knockouts. The 20-year-old is 22-0 with 17 knockouts. Alex Banal, an 18-year-old Filipino southpaw who is 12-0 with a draw and 10 knockouts, fights against Mexico's Juan Rosas, 25-2, in a 10-round junior bantamweight bout. Aussie Billy Dib, who is 15-0, faces Mexican Jose Gonzalez, 14-3 in a junior lightweight bout. England's John Murray, a 22-year-old lightweight with a 20-0 record, will meet American Lorenzo Bethea, 6-4, with one knockout, in an eight-round bout. English southpaw John O'Donnell, a 15-0 welterweight from Croydon, carries a 15-0 mark into an eight-round bout against Mexican Christian Solano. *AFP*



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SPORTS

MIÑOZA VS GIBSON

Tale of 2 Asian Tour standouts

MIÑOZA

GIBSON

ASIANTOUR.COM BEGINS A WEEKLY SERIES called Head to Head which pits the region's stars against each other through a variety of questions posed to them. Good friends Frankie Miñoza of the Philippines and Canadian Rick Gibson are in this week's hot seats.—Ed

How do you warm up?

Miñoza: I'll start with my 60-degree sand wedge and move up to the nine, seven and five irons, hitting no more than 10 balls each. Then I'll hit a few drivers and then back to the wedge. Then it's off to the putting green.

Gibson: It starts in my room where I do about 15 minutes of yoga. I'll spend 20 minutes at the range hitting the odd-numbered irons on one day, even numbered the next day. I seldom hit the driver. Then I'll hit some putts and chips.

What do you do after completing a round?

Miñoza: I'll normally have something to eat and then hit a few balls at the range.

Gibson: It depends on the weather. If it's hot, there's a big chance I'll be going home!

What's the worst thing that you fear when you're playing?

Miñoza: All players fear that one club-length putt to make the halfway cut.

Gibson: The only thing for me is if the club-head comes off after a shot.

After a round of 65, what do you do afterwards?

Miñoza: Go practice again and stick to my normal routine.

Gibson: I'll practice for about 45 minutes. But you'll have to forget about the round quickly.

How about after a 78?

Miñoza: If I'd missed the cut, I'll go straight back to the hotel.

Gibson: I always try to stick to my routine.

After posting a double bogey, what goes through your mind at the next tee?

Miñoza: Sometimes, I get really angry, which is normal. But I'll be thinking of starting all over again and not carry the anger to the next hole.

Gibson: I normally play better. It's like an awakening for me.

There's water on the right and OB on the left at the 18th hole, 480-yard par four and you're in position for a top-five finish. How will you play the tee shot?

Miñoza: I'll use the club that I'm comfortable with. If it's the driver that I've used the whole week, I'll use it again.

Gibson: I'll swing it a bit harder. I've never hit a soft driver as I'm quite a short hitter!

If you're drawn to play with Tiger Woods, how do you think you'll react?

Miñoza: Maybe there'll probably be a lot of pressure! I always enjoy playing with top players, it always helps me to concentrate better.

Gibson: It'll be completely different now. I've played with Jack Nicklaus and Lee Trevino and I know Tiger's caddie well which should help.

You're in the Pro-Am and one of your amateurs can't get it off the deck. What will you do?

Miñoza: Try to give him a good lesson.

Gibson: Get him to relax. In some cultures, that'll mean a beer! My tip is never grip the club any harder than when you shake a lady's hand.

Clavecilla seeks RP seniors title repeat

DEFENDING CHAMPION IGGY Clavecilla guns for a championship repeat when the Philippine Senior Amateur Open tees off on May 17 at Iloilo Golf and Country Club.

Clavecilla swept to an eight-shot victory in last year's tournament over a strong field that included runner-up and former national amateur champion Francis Gaston at Riviera's Langer course.

Apart from Gaston this time, Clavecilla will have to contend with Seve Roxas, Bryan Cockrell, Edwin Arcilla, Danilo Pizarro, Caloy Coscoluella and Joe Lao, among others.

Players can avail themselves of a discounted plane fare of P3,826 courtesy of tournament sponsor Philippine Airlines and a 50-percent discount at Sarabia Manor Hotel.

The Open will be a 54-hole tournament for players 55 and above.

Other classes in the tourney organized by the NGAP are Category II (60-64), Category III (65-69), Super Senior I (70-74) and Super Senior II (75-above). *Inquirer Sports Staff*

Smart Hundred Islands Adventure Race fires off

THE CITY OF ALAMINOS IN PANGASINAN FLAGS OFF TODAY THE ANNUAL "Smart Hundred Islands Adventure Race" which will take teams to the islands and islets of the Hundred Islands National Park and to other areas of interest in the city. The adventure race involves different challenges such as running, biking, swimming, trekking, climbing, banca racing, kayaking, spelunking, rapelling, paddling, land navigation and special tasks. The competition is part of the second leg of the colorful Hundred Islands Festival. The race's Fun category will cater to novice three-member adventure racers and weekend warriors with no gender restriction, while the Elite Category will be for three-member teams with at least one female member, professional adventure racers and serious athletes.

HIGHLANDS LADIES CUP: San Miguel Corp. corporate affairs vice president Ramon Santiago (second from left) and Tagaytay Highlands Ladies Chapter treasurer Joji Bautista (third from left) sign the contract making SMC the platinum sponsor of the second Highlands Ladies Cup slated May 19 at Tagaytay Midlands. Also in photo are Highlands Ladies Cup tournament chair Dionne Cu and vice chair Connie Mamaril.

Sotto bats for sports in which Pinoys can excel

SOTTO: Eighth placer in 1984 World Cup

TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Vicente "Tito" Sotto has urged local sports authorities to focus on certain sports in which Filipinos can stand out and become world champions.

"We tend to highlight sports in which we will never excel—for example, basketball and track and field," said Sotto, a multiple gold medalist in bowling in the Southeast Asian Games and eighth placer in the 1984 World Cup in Sydney.

"There is no way we can win an Olympic gold in these sports. We need to refocus our efforts and come up with an honest-to-goodness grassroots program."

Sports such as boxing, billiards, bowling, swimming and table tennis, he said, should be given more emphasis.

"*Lahat ng* billiards world champions *nasa atin, magagaling talaga* (We've got the world champions in all billiards events—we're that good)," said Sotto.

Sotto said local table tennis, with proper support and direction, could develop world champions.

"Let's target sports events that can be easily promoted and played by our people," he said. "Table tennis for instance. If we put in table tennis tables in every barangay all over the country, *may laban ngayon tayo* (we can excel in it).

"You don't need height here as in basketball. In table tennis, all you need is speed and eye and hand coordination."

He said youth who are into sports can avoid drugs and other vices. "It's like killing two birds with one stone," Sotto said. "If we keep our youth busy in sports then we can lick the menace of drugs."

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SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Money supply grew 24.6% P2.9T in March /B6

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BUSINESS

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Inflation inches up to 2.3% in April

BSP seen keeping interest rates steady

By Michelle V. Remo

CONSUMER PRICES GREW 2.3 PERCENT IN April from a year ago, rising slightly from 2.2 percent the previous month.

Despite the acceleration, monetary authorities still considered as benign the inflation rate for April since it was within the 2- to 2.7-percent forecast made by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Average inflation for the first four months of the year stood at 2.8 percent. Monetary authorities said this kept the country on track to meeting the BSP's target of keeping full-year inflation at or below 4-5 percent.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile prices of selected food and energy items, was at 2.6 percent in April, or the same as that in March.

"The slightly higher inflation rate for April confirms our view that the base effects of (the expanded) VAT are diminishing. Overall, the inflation outlook remains favorable," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a briefing.

The expanded VAT law raised the tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent in February last year. It was expected to push consumer prices up, but officials said its impact was softened by the appreciation of the peso.

The strengthening of the peso, which broke into and has been hovering in the 47-to-a-dollar level since April, makes imported goods cheaper, tempering increases in overall consumer prices.

The slightly faster increase in consumer prices in April was due to higher inflation rates for food, beverage and tobacco (2.8 percent in April from 2.7 percent in March); fuel, light and water (2.2 percent from 1.2 percent), and services (2.3 percent from 2.2 percent).

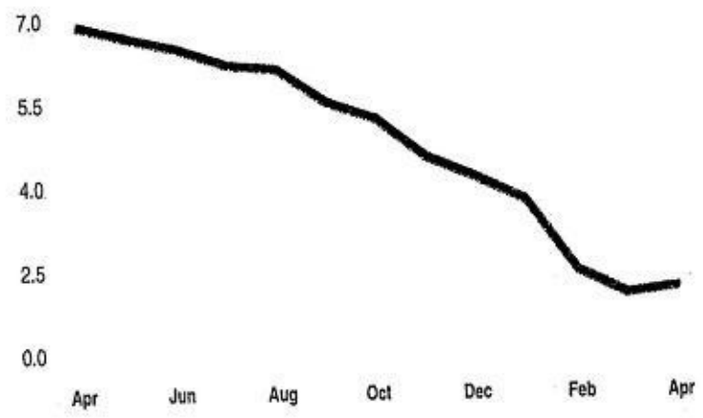
The BSP earlier said that the increase in consumer prices remained benign in the absence of any major supply disruptions. It said, however, that there were threats to the government's inflation targets, including the year-on-year growth in domestic liquidity that had been above 20 percent early this year.

Monetary authorities said a comfortable level of liquidity growth was below 20 percent.

The BSP said it was keeping its policy rates at 7.5 percent because of the benign inflation. But it had to implement some measures to help ensure inflation targets for the short term were met.

These measures include the decision to offer a higher interest rate on deposits of state-owned firms to the BSP to mop up excess liquidity in the system. Tetangco said the rate would be higher than interest rates on government securities.

INFLATION RATES
April 2006 to April 2007



Gov't pressed to resolve infrastructure problems

By Amy R. Remo

WHILE THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND MULTILATERAL agencies have commended the big push for infrastructure development, they urged the government to address concerns that have stalled a number of key projects like the Naia 3 international terminal.

At the 2nd National Government Infrastructure Forum held yesterday, business leaders and representatives of the donor community were generally "bullish, enthusiastic and excited" about the improvements on the infrastructure front.

The US Agency for International Development and other private corporations commended the government for what they called "impressive" developments in the country's infrastructure.

However, they called the attention of the government's Infrastructure Monitoring Task Force (IMTF) to address concerns on irregularity of policies, unnecessary project investigations, transparency in projects, fair competition and sanctity of contracts.

"The US remains bullish with the country's fiscal and economic condition, but we hope that these infrastructure projects will all soon become realities. Sometimes, nothing happens," lamented USAID mission director Jon D. Lindborg, who cited the case of the controversial Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 project.

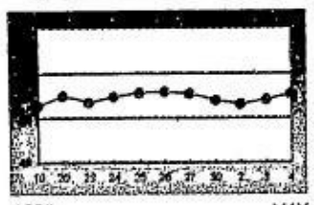
PCCI chair Donald G. Dee also expressed support for the government's infrastructure programs, but suggested that the government should come up with effective monitoring to enhance the implementing capabilities of the IMTF.

Sycip Gorres Velayo founder Washington Sycip echoed the same sentiment, saying: "Rapid development of infrastructure is key to poverty alleviation and fast economic development. We have to make projects fully transparent. I suggest that an independent

INFLATION/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



APRIL MAY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 47.46 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 4, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.20-PERCENT higher yesterday, lifted by another record breaking Wall Street performance overnight and the release of benign inflation figures for April, dealers said.

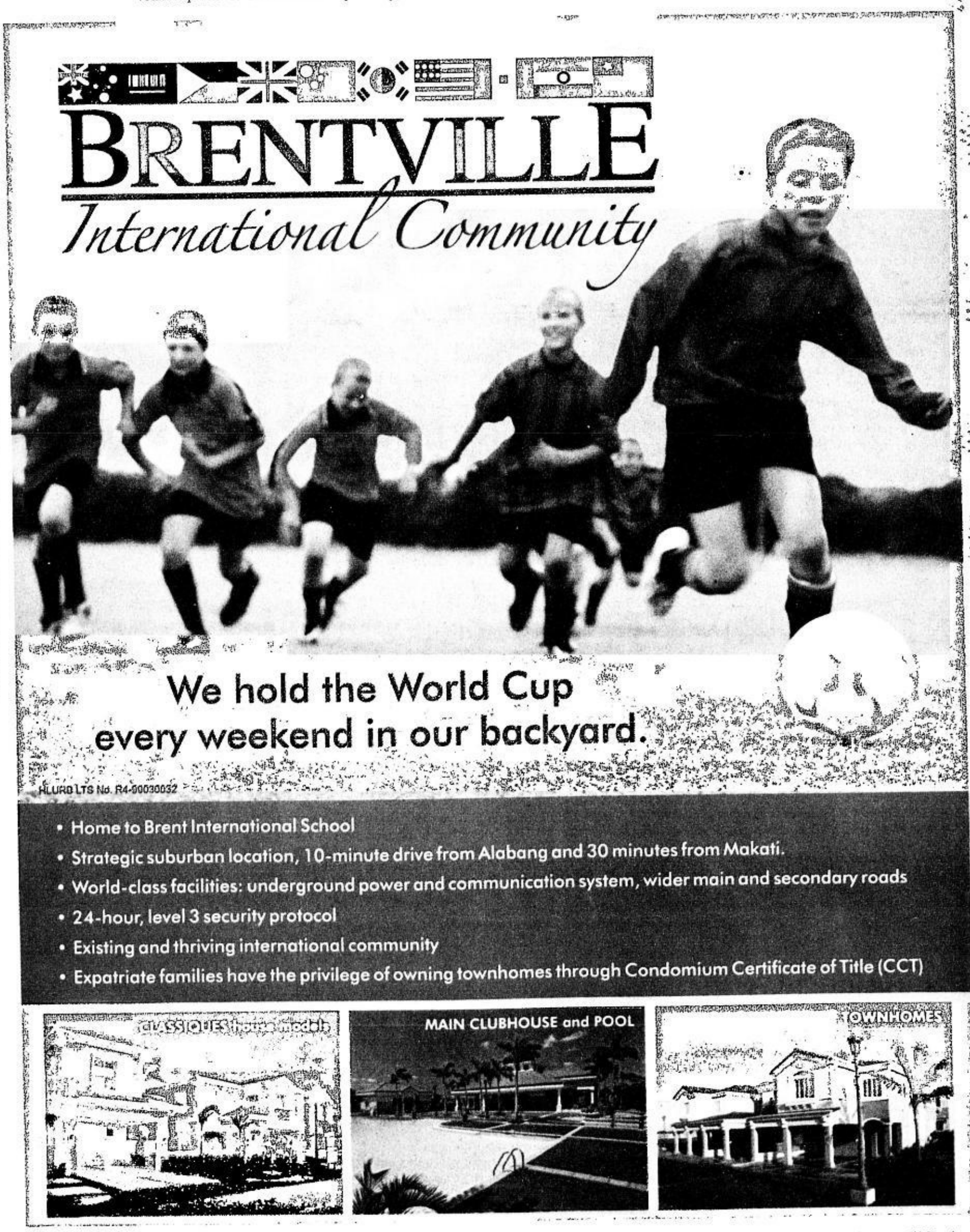
The composite index was up 6.95 points at 3,278.48 after trading between 3,263.20 and 3,293.05.

Gainers beat losers 52 to 40, with 67 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 1.8 billion shares worth P3.8 billion.

The consumer price index inched up 2.3 percent year-on-year in April compared to 2.2 percent in March, well within market ex-

SHARES/ B2



SEC okays Alliance Global bid to sell 1.8B shares

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

ALLIANCE GLOBAL GROUP INC., the holding firm of property developer Andrew Tan, said it expects to raise P14.4 billion in net proceeds from an offering of new shares.

The company said the money would be used to finance part of its P10-billion capital expenditure program this year.

The Securities and Exchange Commission yesterday said it has approved the issuance by Alliance Global of 1.8 billion new shares.

Selling shareholders will also unload another 1.33 billion shares, which are estimated to raise P14.08 billion in net proceeds.

Up to 470 million issued and outstanding shares will cover any overallotment pertaining to the offer, Alliance Global said. The offer price is set at P8 a share.

Alliance Global said that among its capital expenditure items for this year were the acquisition and construction of an alcohol distillery, investment in flavored alcoholic beverages and the potential acquisition of a food and beverage business.

Last Feb. 16, Alliance Global widened its business portfolio by acquiring 25 percent (in addition to the group's 21 percent) in Megaworld Corp. and 100-percent equity in Emperador Distillers Inc., the manufacturer of Emperador and Generoso brandy.

With a 46-percent equity in Megaworld, Alliance Global has become the the property developer's parent holding company.

Megaworld and Emperador will be consolidated into Alliance Global starting this year.

Philodrill acquires PGO for ₱32M

By Abigail L. Ho

LISTED FIRM PHILODRILL Corp. has acquired for P32.4 million Phoenix Gas and Oil Exploration Co. Inc. (PGO), a company that holds stakes in two petroleum blocks all over the country.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Philodrill corporate secretary Adrian Arias said the transaction involved 4.07 billion shares held by two companies and five individuals at par value of one centavo each.

"The purchase price was mutually agreed upon by the parties as the fair value of PGO, based on its assets and liabilities. The purchase price was paid in cash," he said.

Shares purchased were those held by Phoenix Energy Corp. and Combined Equity Ventures Inc., and individuals Yolanda Balmes, Raymundo Feliciano, Raymundo Feliciano Jr., Felix Gonzalez Jr. and Antonio Sevilla.

According to Arias, PGO holds a stake of 1.1 percent in Service Contract 6A (Octon), 28.1 percent in SC 6B, 22.5 percent in SC 14 (Tara), 15.3 percent in SC 14B1 (North Matinloc), 0.6 percent in SC 14C (Galoc) and 2.5 percent in SC 14C (West Linapacan).

Philodrill also has interests in those petroleum service contracts.

Arias said that apart from both holders of some interests in SC 6 and SC 14, there was no relation between Philodrill and PGO, between Philodrill's and PGO's affiliates, and between Philodrill's and PGO's directors or officers.

PHILIPPINE Economic Zone Authority (Peza) Director General Lilia De Lima (second from right) congratulates Megaworld Chairman and CEO Andrew Tan (second from left) after Megaworld secures Peza certification for McKinley Hill Cyberpark as an Information Technology economic zone.

PSE seeks public's help on arrest of fugitive broker

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) is seeking help from the public to track down Francisco Borromeo, a stockbroker who is wanted in connection with criminal cases filed against him for various violations of the Securities Regulation Code (SRC).

PSE president Francis Lim said in a statement that Borromeo was facing arrest warrants for seven counts of violating securities laws issued by the Regional Trial Court of Makati City. This cases were an offshoot of the 2003 collapse of Asian Capital Equities Inc. (ACEI).

Based on PSE records, Borromeo is described as a 50-year-old businessman with a last registered address at D-3 Crown Place, #6 New Manila, Quezon City.

Borromeo was president of ACEI when it collapsed in November 2003. A joint audit conducted at that time by the PSE and Securities and Exchange Commission uncovered ACEI's questionable deals and accounts, which triggered ACEI's financial failure.

The PSE did not elaborate.

Results of the joint SEC-PSE audit became the basis for the courts to issue arrest warrants against Borromeo.

Lim said the PSE has sought the help of the National Bureau of Investigation to look for Borromeo, but even the NBI's efforts have been unsuccessful. "The PSE, thus, is appealing to the public for help in locating Borromeo," Lim said. "He has to face the consequences of his stock trading practices, which hurt a lot of investors and besmirched the good name of the exchange. The NBI reports that he could be hiding somewhere in Cebu."

ACEI's collapse prompted the SEC to issue a takeover order in November 2003 and directed the PSE to assume control over the brokerage firm's operations to protect the interest of ACEI's hapless clients.

"Our aggressive stance on the arrest of Borromeo is our way of assuring investors that we will not (tolerate) malpractices in the stock market. Our market deserves our investors' continued trust and confidence," Lim said.

Lim said that the Prosecution and Enforcement Department (PED) of the PSE will treat with utmost confidentiality any information that will lead to the arrest of Borromeo. Readers may get in touch with the PSE-PED through (632) 688-7545 and (632) 688-7540 or by sending an e-mail to ped@pse.com.ph.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

1ST QUARTER

Globe posts ₱2.6B net profit

GLOBE TELECOM YESTERDAY REPORTED A 10-percent jump in revenues to P15.6 billion, but said its net profit was down 25 percent at P2.6 billion due to a P1.2-billion non-recurring, after-tax impact of the early redemption of $300 million in bonds that were originally due in 2012.

Excluding foreign exchange and mark-to-market gains and losses and the non-recurring impact of the bond redemption, it said core net income reached a new high of P3.7 billion.

"We are very pleased with the record growth and operating performance of Globe in the first quarter," said Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr., Globe president and CEO. "We will work hard to sustain this strong start into the rest of the year, by continuing to focus on improving operational efficiencies and on enhancing our customers' experience."

Globe closed the first quarter with a wireless SIM base of 16.9 million on the back of net additions of 1.3 million resulting from lower churn rates across all brands. The company's postpaid and prepaid brands registered growth in their SIM base, with Touch Mobile continuing to lead the pack with a 49-percent year-on-year subscriber growth.

Globe said its wireline business continued to be driven by growth in the consumer broadband, which grew 167 percent in the first quarter, and corporate data segments.

While the positive environment was favorable to business in general, Globe said it continued to introduce key initiatives to further stimulate usage and enhance quality of products and services, as well as strengthen subscriber acquisitions.

Globe said it spent P3.1 billion in capital expenditures in the first quarter as part of its P17-billion capital spending program for this year.

Shares close higher

From page B1

pectations, ruling out the possibility of an interest rate hike in the near term. *(See story on this page.)*

"There was a recovery in interest rate-sensitive issues such as property and banking stocks which were recently battered over worries that a higher inflation rate could push up interest rates," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

Grace Cerdenia of 2TradeAsia.com said that despite the slight uptick in consumer prices last month, inflation remained benign, which was supportive of the central bank's monetary policy.

Ron Rodrigo of Unicapital Securities said he expected the market to retest the 3,300 points resistance and consolidate at that level as soon as jitters over escalating violence in the run-up to the May mid-term elections have faded.

"The market will again start focusing on fundamentals, depending on the outcome of the elections. Right now, the economic fundamentals are taking a backseat with politics weighing down the market," Rodrigo said.

Among the day's winners were property stocks, led by Megaworld, which gained 15 centavos to P3.55, while upscale property developer Belle edged up four centavos to P1.32. *AFP*

Gov't pressed to resolve . . .

From page B1

technocrat, to be agreed upon by the business community, should be put in place, free to monitor projects."

IMTF head Cerge M. Remonde yesterday presented to the private sector and other development partners 26 priority "ready-to-go" infrastructure projects in the Luzon Urban Beltway super-region.

Included in the government's 2006-2010 Medium Term Public Investment Program, these projects are those whose legal issues have been resolved and are ready for implementation.

Among these projects are the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, the Northrail-Southrail linkage, Daang Hari-SLEX link road, Southern Tagalog arterial road, Subic Bay port development project, Cawit port improvement, the Laiban Dam (for Metro Manila's water supply) and the North-South Toll Road project.

"These projects are geared toward making the super-region a globally competitive industrial and services center where the movement of goods, services and people are seamless," Remonde said.

He added that 55 percent of the country's gross domestic product comes from the Luzon Urban Beltway, which extends from parts of Region 3, the National Capital Region, to parts of Region 4.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 4, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.5	13	12.5	13	8,100
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	63.5	65	63.5	64	606,200
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	59	59	58	58	458,700
935	630	China Banking Corp.	920	925	900	925	6,130
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
119	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	102	103	101	101	251,500
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	1,800,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	59.5	60.5	59.5	60	4,325,500
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	46	46	46	46	4,000
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	64	64	64	64	1,000
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	2,479,100
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	80.5	86.5	80.5	86.5	546,400
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
7.7	1.5	CitiSecOnline.com Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	298,000
6.3	3.5	Filipino Fund Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5,000
0.8	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.75	0.76	0.75	0.75	230,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37	37.5	37	37.5	10,200
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.25	4.35	4.15	4.3	35,825,000
2.22	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.1	2.16	2.1	2.14	534,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	535	535	530	535	1,950
1.68	1.02	Vantage Corp.	1.62	1.84	1.8	1.82	6,230,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
0.37	0.16	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	280,000
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	58.5	59.5	58.5	59.5	262,400
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	78.5	79	78	78	646,000
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Company Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12.25	4,134,000
81	13	Manila Electric Company A	76	78.5	76	77.5	828,900
82	19	Manila Electric Company B	76.5	78.5	76.5	78	3,047,500
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6	6	5.8	5.9	28,976,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.1	5.2	5	5.2	9,111,000
2.2	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	3,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	330,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.14	2.16	4,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26.5	26.5	26	26	7,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	53.5	54.5	53.5	54	1,005,500
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.38	1.4	2,596,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.44	2.44	2.42	2.42	67,000
67.5	61	San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	64	64.5	138,300
84	68	San Miguel Corp. B	72.5	73.5	72.5	73.5	120,200
0.51	0.185	Swift Foods Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	260,000
24	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.	16	16	15.75	15.75	2,602,300
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.17	1.07	EEI Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.75	4.75	713,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	145,000
9.1	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	2,698,000
7.5	2.04	Philippine National Const. Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	2,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.8	1.72	1.74	3,371,000
		CHEMICALS					
5.9	1.26	Chemuez Technologies Inc.	5.6	5.9	5.5	5.9	17,889,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIAL					
0.43	0.06	Picop Resources Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.26	0.27	7,240,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.35	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.7	3.75	3.65	3.7	1,009,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	1,300,000
0.59	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.54	0.55	0.53	0.55	10,100,000
3.3	1.48	ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	8,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	41,500,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	20,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.8	9	8.8	8.9	1,903,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	73,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.4	636,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	300,000
2.24	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.18	4,634,000
680	327.5	Ayala Corp.	600	600	595	595	807,400
14	7.67	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	14	14	14	14	6,000
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.55	4.55	451,000
4.45	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.75	19,746,000
7.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.8	7.3	7.4	7,076,000
1.3	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. A	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	30,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	58,000
0.42	0.13	Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.35	0.3	0.32	550,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	10,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12.5	12	12.5	633,000
2.6	0.6	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. A	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	10,000
2.65	1	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	200,000
0.43	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	50,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	110,000
12.5	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	252,600
3.6	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	2,313,000
0.48	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	3,590,000
407.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	357.5	365	357.5	362.5	322,870
0.51	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.37	18,960,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.73	900,000
1.34	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.24	510,000
0.41	0.05	Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	600,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.16	0.16	430,000
0.55	0.15	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	50,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Company Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	623,000
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	40,000
18.5	10.25	Ayala Land Inc.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.5	8,822,300
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.28	1.34	1.28	1.32	5,106,000
3.1	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.32	2.36	2.32	2.36	1,327,000
4.5	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.2	4.45	4.2	4.45	1,155,000
2.1	1	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp.B	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	250,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	43,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	1,220,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	250,000
3.1	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.4	3.1	2.4	3.1	12,594,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.8	0.78	0.78	16,320,000
0.165	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	1,930,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.76	0.78	0.75	0.78	1,250,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.8	1.84	1.8	1.82	51,052,000
0.33	0.05	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	230,000
3.35	2.04	Highlands Prime Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	65,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	11,200,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	100,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.44	0.45	22,580,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.76	0.8	0.76	0.77	12,530,000
3.95	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.55	88,471,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.6	4.65	4.6	4.65	194,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	1,150,000
3.5	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	39,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.5	416,300
5.7	1.48	SM Development Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.4	1,715,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.5	2,585,500
0.27	0.06	Univide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.2	1,440,000
1.74	0.3	Zurpcab Real Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
		MEDIA					
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	437,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,215.00	1,225.00	1,215.00	1,220.00	92,820
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,535.00	2,535.00	2,520.00	2,520.00	76,580
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	392,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	1,530,000
7	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.3	6.5	983,000
7.3	2	IPVG Corp.	6.7	7.3	6.7	7.3	4,459,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	4,500,000
2.9	1.38	Ionics Inc.	2.34	2.34	2.3	2.3	103,000
1.84	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.4	133,000
0.06	0.025	PhilWeb Com Inc.	0.046	0.047	0.046	0.047	47,900,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.22	2.22	130,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	179,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.3	1,101,000
32	11.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	27.5	27.5	27	27.5	3,142,100
2.08	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.94	2.04	1.94	2.04	3,384,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.9	4.05	3.85	4.05	4,542,000
0.45	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	850,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.93	0.95	0.93	0.95	10,960,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
4.35	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.95	2,035,000
16	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	13.75	14.25	13.75	14.25	994,300
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	27	27	27	27	1,310,500
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	123,500,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	82,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	379,000
18.5	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	18	18	17.5	17.75	1,572,100
14.75	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	12	12	12	12	40,900
1.98	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.88	1.98	1.88	1.94	34,645,000
0.42	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	37,880,000
0.47	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	7,580,000
0.037	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.035	0.035	0.034	0.035	305,600,000
0.039	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.037	0.037	0.036	0.036	156,300,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	216,300,000
5.9	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5	5.1	4.95	4.95	6,577,000
32	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	47,200
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.38	1.38	1,333,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	2,810,000
0.017	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	27,300,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	11,400,000
2.24	1.5	PNOC Exploration Corp. A	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.24	40,000
14.81	7.88	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	10	10	10	306,000
0.0182	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.015	241,000,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH — SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 4, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.737518	1.000000	47.6730
Japan	Yen	0.006130	0.008311	0.3962
United Kingdom	Pound	1.466406	1.988300	94.7882
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094298	0.127859	6.0954
Switzerland	Franc	0.606511	0.822368	39.2047
Canada	Dollar	0.666411	0.903587	43.0767
Singapore	Dollar	0.484539	0.656987	31.3205
Australia	Dollar	0.607260	0.823384	39.2532
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.956332	2.652590	126.4569
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.196661	0.266652	12.7121
Brunei	Dollar	0.482953	0.654836	31.2180
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000111	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022519	0.030534	1.4556
UAE	Dirham	0.200811	0.272279	12.9804
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.355900	64.6398
Korea	Won	0.000796	0.001079	0.0514
China	Yuan**	0.095614	0.129643	6.1805
Argentina	Peso	0.239066	0.324149	15.4532
Brazil	Real	0.365216	0.495197	23.6075
Denmark	Kroner	0.134255	0.182037	8.6782
India	Rupee	0.018068	0.024498	1.1679
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215649	0.292398	13.9395
Mexico	New Peso	0.067594	0.091651	4.3693
New Zealand	Dollar	0.542452	0.735510	35.0640
Norway	Kroner	0.123172	0.167009	7.9618
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012166	0.016496	0.7864
South Africa	Rand	0.106125	0.143895	6.8599
Sweden	Kroner	0.109087	0.147911	7.0514
Syria	Pound	0.014208	0.019264	0.9184
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022162	0.030049	1.4325
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000344	0.000466	0.0222

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 3, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of April 30, 2007

TI expansion seen leading to more investments

'We broke China myth,' says semiconductor industry

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DOMESTIC SEMICONDUCTOR industry anticipates a "cascading effect" from Texas Instruments' decision to expand its Philippine operations as this could act as a magnet for more investments from other companies.

Ernesto B. Santiago, executive director of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc., said in an interview that TI Philippines' expansion meant that "we broke the China myth."

Santiago said China had become a hot destination of investments in the past few years, but the local industry proved that the Philippines can be the best possible project site in the region.

"That we secured this project showed that the business model of government-private sector cooperation makes big things happen," he said.

"The government, as well as the industry as a whole—even competitors supported (the campaign to convince TI)—worked very hard for this for a whole year," the Seipi official added.

Santiago said the clincher was TI Philippines' positive experience in over 28 years of operation in the Philippines.

"TI's facility in Baguio had the track record of being the most efficient (in the region if not the world) in its global network," he said. "The company also considered the good record of its workers here, especially since the firm had had no labor-related problem."

The investment is touted as the single biggest investment for export manufacturing.

Santiago said it could be presumed that other manufacturing companies would follow TI's move as well as allied and support industries, such as operations of suppliers for manufacturers' needs.

In an interview last Thursday, Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said officials of TI Philippines informed him that the company has some 500 suppliers and was, in fact, in talks with at least three who were interested in putting up facilities near the firm's expansion site at the Clark freeport zone.

"The Clark Development Corp. has alloted some 30 hectares nearby for prospective support investments," Favila said.

The trade chief said TI Philippines total expansion outlay could cost up to $1.7 billion and could create a total of 10,000 new jobs at full capacity.

In a statement, TI announced that its new site aimed at being the most environmentally efficient assembly and test site in the world.

Assembly and test operations are the final step in semiconductor manufacturing before chips are shipped to customers, TI explained.

Starting with bare silicon chips called "die," assembly/test sites perform precise packaging operations that serve as the interface between the integrated circuit and the system it supports.

Final tests are run on highly sophisticated equipment to ensure the packaged product is operating across a full range of specifications and is ready for shipment.

At 77,000 square meters, the site would double the capacity that TI has in the Philippines, the firm said.

ACER Philippines embarked on its first corporate social responsibility activity for the year by giving away food and goodies at the Philippine School for the Deaf, the country's first school for the hearing impaired.

Megaworld to build ₱3.5-B condo

MEGAWORLD CORP., THE COUNTRY'S largest residential condominium developer, has earmarked P1 billion for a 35-story project at the Makati central business district.

Clifford A. Legaspi, company assistant vice president, said in a briefing that the project dubbed Greenbelt Chancellor would be the firm's third high-end condominium in the Greenbelt area.

Legaspi said it was also the first pre-furnished condominium, where each unit would have a 21-inch flat screen television set, home theater system, cook range and range hood, sofa, dining table set, bed frame with mattress, bedroom closet and kitchen cabinet set.

"At our rate of P85,000 per square meter compared to our competitors' price of between P90,000 and P110,000 , these furnishings are actually free add-on (values)," Legaspi said.

Legaspi said pre-selling has started as Greenbelt Chancellor has undergone a soft launch, although formal launching was set on May 11.

Construction along Rada Street in Legaspi Village will start in the fourth quarter of this year in time with the target delivery date of October 2010.

Studio-type units come in areas of 36 square meters, 38 sq.m. and 46 sq.m., with the latter two being provided with balconies. Single-bedroom units occupy 55 sq.m.

"There is a single penthouse unit and this is the only one priced at the high range of 13.4 million," he added.

Megaworld's completed projects in the area include the Greenbelt Radissons and the Greenbelt Parkplace, where model units for Greenbelt Chancellor would be available for viewing by end-May.

Legaspi said the target market for new Greenbelt Chancellor includes entrepreneurs, doctors (because it is near the Makati Medical Center), and overseas-based Filipino professionals.

Ronnel W. Domingo

Baggak festival boosts Bauang as latest retirement haven

By Hanna Lacsamana
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAUANG, LA UNION—DESPITE THE LACK OF indigenous cultural festivals in the province, nine groups of street dancers composed of high school and elementary students became the main attraction of the Baggak Festival here.

Unmindful of the sun's searing heat, the street dancers garbed in colorful costumes danced their way around the town's main streets before their grand presentation at the packed Bauang auditorium.

The festival, called "baggak," an Ilocano word which means morning star, is now on its 9th year.

It is aimed at drawing more tourists to the town, which is also popular for its pristine beaches and resorts.

The term, according to Mayor Eulogio Clarence de Guzman III, was chosen to also inspire the people of Bauang to move forward as a town in line with its battle cry "Sulong Bauang."

De Guzman said the town has become more popular to tourists through the festival, which was launched in 1998.

Last year, the festival lured more than 2,000 tourists, mostly *balikbayans* or returning residents.

That prompted the town government to include the festival in its campaign to make Bauang a retirement haven for returning residents.

Some balikbayans have decided to stay for good, setting up their houses and contributing to the economic development of Bauang, he said.

DMCI inks power deal with Masbate co-op

By Abigail L. Ho

DMCI HOLDINGS has forged a power supply agreement with the Masbate Electric Cooperative (Maselco) for the supply of 13 megawatts (MW) of electricity at P7.07 a kilowatt-hour.

Under the agreement, DMCI would provide Maselco with reliable power at almost half the National Power Corp. rate of P12 per kWh.

Masbate currently has only 8 MW of electricity.

According to the Department of Energy, with DMCI now supplying power to the province, Maselco would be able to provide electric service to Masbate's customer base of 560,000, from its present coverage of only 125,000.

Prior to DMCI's entry into Masbate, the country's second poorest province, power supply came from Napocor's Small Power Utilities Group (Spug).

As with other Napocor-Spug areas, Masbate was opened for private sector participation, with the help of the International Finance Corp.; the World Bank's private sector arm.

Other Napocor-Spug areas offered to private power producers included Tablas, Romblon, Marinduque, Oriental Mindoro, mainland Palawan, Catanduanes, Bantayan Island, Occidental Mindoro, Camotes Island, Siquijor, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Masbate is the eighth Napocor-Spug area to be privatized since December 2005.

"The privatization of the Napocor-Spug areas will significantly contribute in sustaining the turnaround in Napocor's finances, given the reduction in subsidy to these areas. This will also bring efficiency in power supply management that will result in lower rates for consumers in the area," Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in a statement.

For his part, IFC acting country manager for the Philippines and Thailand Jesse Ang said its strategy for the Philippines included throwing support behind power sector reform through increased private sector participation, as this promoted competition.

"We want to partner with the government and private sector to establish an efficient structure that meets a growing demand for power, particularly in rural areas. With more affordable electricity, we hope that more businesses will open and flourish, attracting investors, creating jobs, and improving the economy," he said.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0254 Website: www.nfa.gov.ph

ERRATUM
to the
INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF AGUSTA HELICOPTER

In connection with the invitation to bid published on April 25, 2007 and May 2, 2007 and for the information of the prospective bidders, the specifications for the Agusta 109 A helicopter is as follows:

Brand	Construzoini Aeronautiche Giovanni
Model Number	AGUSTA 109 A
Serial No.	7184
Year Manufactured	1980
Registration No.	RP-609
Specifications	8-seater, multi-engine 840 shaft horse power, Allison Model 250-C20B turbine engine Serial Nos. CAE-832080 and CAE-832146, four bladed main rotor blade and see-saw type tail rotor blade, with standard instrumentation and equipped with GPS Garmin 155. Total flying time is 2.753.54 hours. The helicopter is presently grounded due for annual inspection With Certificate of Registration valid until September 2, 2007.

(Sgd.) PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.
Deputy Administrator and BAC Chairperson

(PDI – May 5, 2007)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Pampanga Lending Center
City of San Fernando, Pampanga

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposals for the purchase on CASH BASIS of the properties listed below will be received at the Office of the Assistant Vice President, **Pampanga Lending Center, LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES**, 3rd Floor Freluz Bldg., Olongapo-Gapan Road, Dolores, City of San Fernando Pampanga not later than **May 14, 2007 (Monday), 10:00 AM** at which place, date and time said proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders.

DESCRIPTION/LOCATION	MINIMUM BID
A 19,887 square meter parcel of land (Lot 4-B-4, Psd 03-005172) located along NLEX Dau Service Road, about 60 meters from Dau Toll Gate, Dau, Mabalacat, Pampanga, registered in the name of Landbank per TCT No. 516803-R including improvements thereon (Showroom/Office Bldg., service center, resthouse etc.)	P39,705,949.00

Bid forms, Rules and Regulations may be obtained from the Office of the Assistant Vice President, Pampanga Lending Center, **LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES, 3rd Floor, Freluz Building, Olongapo-Gapan Road, Dolores City of San Fernando, Pampanga.** Prospective bidders are enjoined to inspect the above-cited properties before entering their bid.

The sale of the above-mentioned property/ies is at an **"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"** basis. The winning bidder/s shall take possession of the awarded property/ies without seeking assistance from the Bank. The award in favor of the winning bidder shall be subject to the approval of the LBP approving authorities.

LAND BANK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN AND TO ACCEPT THE BID MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES SHALL BE FINAL AND BINDING.

(Sgd.) CECILIA C. BORROMEO

(PDI - May 3, 4 & 5, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
AAM-PHIL NATURAL RESOURCES EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Suite 601-A S&L Bldg., 1500 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Ching Chi Ngan	Admin. Supervisor
CITIC-UAA GROUP (PHILS.), INC. Level 15, Tower 1, The Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Ave. cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Kitson Soriano Kho	Asst. Finance Manager
AAM-PHIL NATURAL RESOURCES EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Suite 601-A S&L Bldg., 1500 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Daohuan Lu	Asst. Admin Supervisor
IDEMITSU TANKER CO., LTD. 17/F Marc 2000 Tower, 1973 Taft Ave., Malate Manila	Hiroshi Yasuo	Chief Representative
AYALA LAND, INC. 28/F Tower One, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Ave., Makati City	David Michael Spence	Consultant
STRYKER MEDICAL & SURGICAL (PHILIPPINES) INC. 4D APMC Bldg., 136 Amorsolo cor. Gamboa Sts., Legaspi Vilage, Makati City	Ki Chul Chang	President/ General Manager
STRYKER MEDICAL & SURGICAL (PHILIPPINES) INC. 4D APMC Bldg., 136 Amorsolo cor. Gamboa Sts., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Dae Hyun Cho	Director and Financial Controller
FIRST DAE-AH TRADING CORP. G/F EDSA Arcade, Libertad cor. EDSA, Mandaluyong City	Seung Uk Hong	Technical Director
GOLF N CASA INTERNATIONAL, INC. 25B Marina Suite Condo, 1588 Pedro Gil cor. M.H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila	Ying Xu	Assistant Marketing Manager
GENERAL MOTORS AUTOMOBILES PHILIPPINES, INC. 30/F Philamlife Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Kurt Edward Leatzow	OnStar Performance Manager
PHIL 119 TOURS AND TRAVEL AGENCY CORP. LJ-908 City & Land Mega Plaza Bldg., Ortigas, Pasig City	Eun Young Choi	Assistant Supervisor
TCL SUN, INC. Rm. 1901 Richville Corporate Tower, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Feng Zhang	Manager
HYDER CONSULTING PHILIPPINES, INC. 25/F Philamlife Tower, Paseo de Roxas Ave., Makati City	Vun Kiong Voo	Bridge Engineer
HYDER CONSULTING PHILIPPINES, INC. 25/F Philamlife Tower, Paseo de Roxas Ave., Makati City	Scott Robert Vincent	Structural Engineer
HONOBONO CORPORATION 505A Manila Bank Bldg., 6772 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Masahiro Umezawa	Customer Service Representative for Japanese Clients
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower I, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	David Ilan Cohen	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower I, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Amichy Elenberg	Customer Support Staff
AAVA CREW MANAGERS (PHILS.) Basement Suite, Legaspi Tower 100, 148 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Ryohei Matsuura	Manila Owners' Representative
PILIPINAS INTERNATIONAL MARKETING SERVICES INC. 28/F Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Heri Yanto Pakpahan	Indonesian Customer Service Associate
SOLAR ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATION 16 Jupiter cor. Antares Sts., Bel-Air Village III, Makati City	Sang Mi Oh	Program Host
GE MONEY BANK, INC. (A SAVINGS BANK) E. Rodriguez cor. Monte de Piedad St., Cubao, Quezon City	Winston Corpuz Serna	Chief Finance Officer
THE MANUFACTURER'S LIFE INSURANCE CO. (PHILS.) INC. LKG Tower, 6801 Ayala Ave., Makati City	John Edward Curtis	Assistant Vice President & Chief Agency Officer

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI - May 5, 2007)

E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

12 ways menopausal women can maintain their health, sanity

By Rebecca B. Singson, MD, FPOGS, FPSCPC
Contributor

MENOPAUSE IS THE absence of menses for at least six months or a Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH) level of 35 IU/ml or above. The average age of menopause for Filipinos is 49, though perimenopause starts as early as 10 years before the actual menopause. Approaching this golden period, here are a dozen tips from a gynecologist's point of view to maintain your health and sanity:

1 Visit a gynecologist annually on your birthday, to get tested for CBC, Urinalysis, Blood Chemistry Panel 23, Chest X-ray, Treadmill test, Transvaginal Ultrasound and Pap Smear, if not hysterectomized. Bilateral Mammography and Fecal Occult Blood for colon cancer screening.

2 If you started sex by 18 years old and have had five sexual partners or have had any partner who was promiscuous, have an HPV test (Human Papillomavirus) aside from Pap Smear. The HPV test is far more accurate than a Pap Smear, which can miss cervical cancer up to 50 percent of cases. This is a more direct test as it detects presence or absence of virus that causes cervical cancer. If HPV test is negative, do a Pap Smear test in three years. However, if the test is positive, the risk of acquiring cervical cancer increases by a hundredfold.

3 Have a Bone Densitometry once in three years to detect osteoporosis. Couple that bone turnover markers such as a 2,3. Dpd-Pyrilinks or Urinary Collagen Ntx test. This is done by submitting your first or second urine in the morning to detect how much bone are lost every day. Should you be given drugs for osteoporosis, these bone turnover tests will also be your basis to tell if drug taken works or not within eight weeks from start of therapy.

4 Are you having hot flashes, mood swings, irritability, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, fatigue, memory loss, low libido, and skin or vaginal dryness? You may need hormone replacement therapy.

5 If you are afraid to use hormone replacement therapy because results of WHI trial increases risk for breast cancer, coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke, venous thromboembolism and pulmonary embolism. (You must realize that this study is extremely flawed). The average age of women included in this study is 65, at which period they are more prone to breast cancer and their arteries are riddled with arteriosclerosis making them more prone to strokes and heart attacks. However, these results are not necessarily true for women who recently went into menopause.

6 You have a choice to take synthetic or natural hormone replacement therapy. The natural bioidentical hormones are plant-based which don't necessarily carry the same risk. You can be as energetic and as vibrant as you were in your teens with hormone replacement therapy.

7 If you have osteopenia or osteoporosis, with all symptoms stated in Tip No. 4, your best bet for correction is hormone replacement therapy. However, if you just have osteopenia or osteoporosis without all the symptoms stated in Tip No. 4, take an anti-bone resorption drug. For osteopenia, the only FDA-approved drug is Raloxifene. For osteoporosis, Raloxifene is the ideal drug for women younger than 65 years old. If over 65, you may use Fosamax daily, Fosavance once a week, Actonel once a week or Bonviva once a month. These medicines must be prescribed by your doctor before taken.

8 The advantage of Raloxifene is that it decreases breast cancer risk by 44 percent equivalent to the effect of Tamoxifen but at the same time may increase the risk of fatal strokes. It is, therefore, the drug recommended to women who need to be treated for osteoporosis with a family history of breast cancer or is strongly fearful of acquiring breast cancer.

9 Be sure you are taking 1,500 mg of calcium every day. You normally obtain about 300-400 mg from your diet so a tablet of calcium twice a day should do the trick. Your calcium should have half the amount of magnesium as your calcium to make a 2:1 ratio as well as some Vitamin D. Your calcium absorption depends on what it is chelated to. You absorb 20 percent calcium from Calcium Carbonate, a little more with Calcium Gluconate, and about 60 percent absorption with calcium citrate, so look for a calcium citrate supplement.

10 However, no matter how much calcium you ingest, if you don't exercise against gravity, you can't force your bones to deposit calcium. So, at least do brisk walking two to three times your normal pace at a minimum of 40 minutes a day. Biking and swimming don't count in helping your bones deposit calcium. Ballroom dancing and tai-chi help in balance training, such that if you drop, you can catch your fall and prevent a fracture.

11 Remember, any vaginal bleeding after menopause is abnormal. So be sure to see a doctor to check out the cause of problem.

12 Menopause is a liberating point in life, free from pregnancy, and many times released from raising kids, who by now have grown independent. It is a period to fulfill yourself, reassess what you have accomplished. Deepen your relationship with God, spouse and or significant others. Have a great moment enriching your life!

The writer is an advocate of good health for women and supports breastfeeding actively. She is a practising Obgyne and holds clinics at Makati Medical Center (892 7879) and at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center (771 92040) or e-mail obmd@surfshop.net.ph.

Home remedies

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

HAVE A HEADACHE? EAT FISH, whose oil helps reduce inflammation. Or ginger, which lessens pain. How about a stomachache? Eat bananas. For pregnant women, ginger can help soothe morning sickness and nausea. For those suffering from premenstrual syndrome, a diet of cornflakes, rich in carbohydrates, can help reduce depression, anxiety and fatigue. A stuffed nose? Garlic can fight colds, and by the way, it lowers cholesterol, too.

Suffering from diarrhea? My child consumes apples and bananas. Can't remember your anniversary? Zinc in oysters can improve mental functioning. Can't sleep? Take honey before bedtime. Its sedative effect is soothing, besides its great taste.

Food as medicine

Medicines are expensive today, so we should keep ourselves healthy. But food can ease common ailments. Fruits, vegetables, and other foods have been used for centuries around the world to alleviate or prevent symptoms of many diseases, such as the following:

- **Strokes**—Aside from baby aspirin, which has been proven to thin the blood (but which can be dangerous for someone whose blood does not easily clot), why not consume green tea? Green tea may prevent buildup of fatty deposits in arteries. The mono unsaturated fat in avocados can also lower cholesterol.
- **High blood pressure**—Olive oil and celery can lower blood pressure.
- **Diabetes**—The chromium in broccoli and peanuts helps regulate insulin and blood sugar.
- **Constipation**—Guava, which is rich in fiber, can help prevent constipation.
- **Stomach problems**—Eat yogurt with healthy bacteria to maintain balance in your stomach.
- **Kidney stones**—Orange can dissolve kidney stones, and may even help prevent colon cancer.
- **Asthma**—Despite their raw smell, onions can help ease the constriction of bronchial tubes.
- **Arthritis**—The omega oils in fish can prevent or delay the onset of arthritis.
- **Osteoporosis**—The manganese in pineapples can help ease bone problems.
- **Ulcers**—Cabbage has chemicals to heal gastric and duodenal ulcers.
- **Urinary tract infection**—I personally swear by this. I consume cranberry juice (unsweetened) every day. The acid content of cranberry juice helps control harmful bacteria.
- **Breast cancer**—Eat wheat, bran, and cabbage, which can help maintain estrogen at healthy levels.
- **Lung cancer**—Think of beta carotene in dark green and orange vegetables such as carrots, spinach and lettuce.
- **Cancer**—Watermelon helps boost our immune system and its lycopene is a cancer-fighting oxidant.
- **Immune system disorders**—Strawberries (and other berries) are great antioxidants.

Ask your doctor

Of course, for serious medical problems, see your doctor. The information above is not meant to replace doctor's advice, and use your common sense. If you are allergic to any of the foods above, don't consume them. In fact, before you start eating any of them, please seek your doctor's advice first.

I bear no responsibility for reader use of the aforementioned advice. I hereby acknowledge the help of my friend Nerisa Fernandez, who forwarded the said information.

Math and love

Christian Canlas, my former student, a Math major who graduated last month, passed to us this note on math and love.

Math tells three of the saddest love stories: Tangent lines who had only one chance to meet and then parted forever; parallel lines who were never meant to meet; and asymptotes who can get closer and closer but will never meet at all.

May our love stories have happier endings.

***

Queena N. Lee-Chua is a professor of mathematics and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Kryptonite for the coral reefs

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

AS I WRITE THIS, GOOGLE NEWS IS LISTing hundreds of stories showing how every so often, life imitates art. Current favorite headline: "Superman no long safe in Serbia." (Second favorite: "Kryptonite Discovered; Adamantium Remains Elusive.") Apparently miners in Serbia recently found an opaque, white rock and asked a British mineralogist to identify it. Said scientist conducted a series of tests and learned the rock contained "sodium lithium boron silicate hydroxide."

When he looked this up on the Internet, he found that except for missing the element fluorine, it was the exact composition for kryptonite as given in the movie "Superman Returns." (The familiar green glow as seen on TV and in the movies might be attributed to the need for better visuals.) To the dismay of fans everywhere, when it is formally described for publication later this year, the nonradioactive rock will be given the name "jadarite," after the location of the Serbian mine.

Feasting on reefs

While jadarite's deceptively harmless appearance should provide reams of story fodder for fans of the near-invincible superhero, the decimated coral reefs surrounding the Philippines threaten to affect future meals. A recent press release from the Philippine branch of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) notes that large numbers of crown-of-thorns starfish have been feasting on reefs around the country.

Studies estimate that a third of the reefs, which make up a quarter of the approximately 100,000 square kilometers of coral reefs in Southeast Asia, are dead, and another 40 percent are dying. Indeed, a recent World Bank report suggests that only one percent of the Philippine coral reefs are untouched.

A crown-of-thorns starfish can go for months without eating. Once it starts, however, it can eat up to 6 square meters or about 60 square feet of coral a year. The WWF story doesn't mention just how many crown-of-thorns starfish are in Philippine waters, but the fact that it takes the reefs up to 15 years to recover from serving as a smorgasbord doesn't help.

Reduced predator populations

The WWF story also notes that the starfish's population has increased due to reduced predator populations; the trumpet triton shell or *tambuli* is found in many gift stores and the humpback wrasse, known locally as *mameng* or *buntogon*, has been overfished. Warmer ocean temperatures have also contributed to the rise in the starfish population.

The decline of the coral reefs only adds to the worries of the resident groupers and those who dine on them. About a fifth of the world's grouper species have been recently added to the World Conservation Union's red list of species facing extinction. While the grouper is known in the local markets as *lapu-lapu*, a search online suggests around 45 different fishes actually bear that appellation, and only two-thirds of them are groupers.

Of these *lapu-lapu* groupers, nearly all have been added to the red list, and three were already there previously. One nongrouper fish added to the red list and known to divers as *lapu-lapu* is the coral hind (*C. miniata*). It joins the orange spotted grouper that I had previously always associated with the term *lapu-lapu* (*E. coioides*).

Last week's column questioned the use of the term "apocalypse" in referring to the climate change summary released by the United Nations' IPCC. The destruction of the coral reefs and the changes they have brought and will continue to bring may well deserve the label. Lex Luthor used kryptonite to defend himself against Superman; if only there was something similar to protect the coral reefs from hungry starfish and overzealous fishermen.

***

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

SciScope

Unilab develops ZincPlus technology

SCIENTISTIS AT PHARMACEUTICAL and healthcare firm United Laboratories (Unilab) have introduced ZincPlus technology, the latest children's resistance against sickness, Unilab president and chief executive officer Carlos Ejercito recently announced.

Prior to the ZincPlus technology, vitamin C and zinc could not be successfully combined in liquid products because vitamin C rapidly degrades in the presence of zinc. As a result, children are not able to get adequate amount of both vitamin C and zinc in products not using ZincPlus.

Developed by PediaTech, the R&D arm of Unilab, ZincPlus is a technology that allows a stable combination of vitamin C and zinc in liquid preparations, assuring children of the correct daily dosage of vitamin C and zinc. This technology is now used in Zeeplus Syrup marketed by Pediatrica, Unilab's pediatric division. Patent applications for ZincPlus technology have been filed in the United States, Southeast Asia and other countries.

The Board of Directors,
the Management and Staff
of
Manila Cordage Company

express their deep sorrow on the passing of

JOSE MARIA "RUSTY" CACHO y ESCAY

Director and Member of the Executive Committee

Knight of St. Sylvester
03 April 1931 - 02 May 2007

His wife, **Marilou Ayesa;**
children, **Marirose, Luis Miguel & Sandra, Mari & Diane, Tono & Diane, Edmund;**
grandchildren, **EJ, Mikel, Marcelo, Marco, Louie, Nikki, Enzo, Christian, & Javi;**
brothers & sisters, **Terry & Joe (†) Arnaiz, Manolo & Tere, Ana (†) & Ote (†) Oteyza, Oxy (†) & Paca, Rosa, Toti & Jobo (†) Fernandez, Nito & Norma;**
relatives & friends, request the pious readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

Wake at St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Church, Magallanes
Masses at 7:00 p.m., May 5-6, 2007.

Requiem Mass at Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati
at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, 07 May 2007.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the ***Dingle Family Farm School, Inc.*** *will be appreciated.*

Justice Vicente Manahan Santiago Jr.

(March 29, 1927 – May 3, 2007)

His loving wife, **GUDING**; children **LIZA & CHUG SICHON, SAMMY & TONI SANTIAGO, CYNTHIA & AL URBANO, JOJIE & ATO YAP, THIRD & MARY ANNE SANTIAGO**; and grandchildren, **Carla, Paolo, Amanda, Carlo, Gino, Catherine, Denise, Isa, Fonz, Therese Anne** and **Anthony** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Christ the King Parish Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City. Mass will be held tomorrow, May 6, 2007 at 8 a.m. His remains will be transferred to his final resting place at the Santiago family mausoleum in San Mateo, Rizal after the mass.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to be made in his honor to the Pusong Pinoy Foundation of the Philippine General Hospital.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

DIANA DY CHIUTEN

April 8, 1948 – April 18, 2007

express our heartfelt gratitude to those who condoled with us, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, cards and messages of sympathy, gave donations, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and memorial services, and who in countless ways helped and comforted us during our moments of bereavement.

Please continue to pray for her eternal repose in heaven.

We design obituaries for free.

Erratum

The requiem mass for

Jose Maria Cacho y Escay

will be on Monday, May 7, 2007
at 9:00 am at the
Santuario de San Antonio,
not on April 7, 2007.

Death Notice

LEONARDO B. BROSAS

Peacefully died in the Grace of our Lord on May 1, 2007 at the age of 80.

His remains lie in state at his residence at No. 85 Rizal St., Liliw, Laguna.

Interment will be tomorrow, May 6, 2007 at Municipal Cemetery, Liliw, Laguna after the 1pm Mass at St. John the Baptist Church, Liliw, Laguna.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

The family, relatives & friends of

RHODORA CRISTOBAL TABIJE

who died in a tragic vehicular accident on her way to help some school children in Jalajala, Rizal

would like to request for your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at St. Mark's Funeral Homes, G. Tuazon corner Loreto, Sampaloc, Manila.

Interment will be tomorrow, May 6, 2007 at the Himlayang Pilipino at 9:00 am after the 8:00 am Mass.

CLASSIFIEDS

IMPROVS training games set on May 9-10

COME TO THE 6TH "PLAYING IMPROVS comedy games while training" on May 9-10 at 23rd floor, Burgundy Corporate Tower, Buendia Ave., Makati City. Empower your corporate training with more than 50 IMPROVS games that will ensure fun and retention in learning. Enrich your daily sessions with variety, depth, insight, color and nuance through IMPROVS games that work for you. Call, fax or email Abundance at thegiftofabundance@yahoo.com or telefax 889.9464, tel 856.2800 and look for Mark Gueco or Kent David.

BERTHAPHIL, INC
Notice is given that Demand Draft No. 001372 in the amount of US$7,500 under the name of RIVKIN RADLER LLP was lost since February 19, 2007.
(PDI - May 4-10, 2007)

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- Experienced in teaching ESL and/or academic subjects
- Between 20-50 years old
- Foreigners (Americans, British, etc.) are most welcome to apply

Submit your resumé on or before May 11, 2007 to:
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FOR SALE THRU SEALED PUBLIC BIDDING
"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

Item	Description	Qty	Minimum Bid Amount
1	Wooden Poles (Treated – various sizes)	1 lot	Php 5,574,000.00

Note: The items for public bidding can be inspected at:

Location	Contact Person	Telephone No.
PNOC Exploration Corporation Energy Supply Base Mainaga, Mabini Batangas	Ronnie Buenviaje or Belmonte Macalincag	(043) 487-0325

Bid forms are available at PNOC-EC Energy Supply Base, Mainaga, Mabini Batangas c/o Ronald G. Buenviaje, tel. no. (043) 487-0325 or at PNOC-EC, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City c/o Iris E. Rivera, tel. no. (02) 840-2024, starting **May 7, 2007**. Ten percent (10%) bid deposit in cash or manager's check is required from the participating bidders.

Deadline for submission of sealed bids is on **May 28, 2007, not later than 2:00 p.m.,** and will be opened on the same date 3:00 p.m. at PNOC Exploration Corporation, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

PNOC-EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality found therein and accepts such bids as maybe considered most advantageous to its interest. The decision of PNOC-EC shall be final and binding.

IER/BCB

(Sgd.) **Irvin A. Sarsoza**
Admin & HR Manager

(PDI–May 4, 5 & 6, 2007)

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DOH-Cagayan Valley A15
Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority A15
National Food Authority B3
Department of Labor & Employment-NCR B3
Landbank Special Assets B3

BUSINESS

Money supply grew 24.6% ₱2.9T in March

End of tax perks takes its toll on Petron profit

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EXPIRATION OF THE INCOME tax holiday for the sale of its mixed xylene product has dragged Petron Corp.'s bottomline down to P953 million in the first quarter from a little more than P1 billion the year before.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the oil refiner said the tax break for mixed xylene sales ended in December 2006.

Cash flow indicator earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) improved slightly to P2.43 billion in the first quarter, up 9 percent from the P2.23 billion recorded the previous year.

However, revenues dipped 17 percent to P43.35 billion in the first three months of the year, from P52.19 billion last year, on the back of lower average oil prices and lower sales volumes.

Domestic sales remained weak, as local oil demand continued to contract. Export sales also declined due to "unfavorable" international prices, particularly in January.

Overall sales volumes dropped by 13.3 percent.

Petron president Khalid Al-Faddagh said that, despite the drawbacks that the company had to endure in the January-March period, it was still able to register a relatively strong performance due to the efficiency programs it had put in place.

"We managed to maintain our resilient performance because of the initiatives that we have implemented over the years, including the application of the latest technologies at various points of our supply chain and our ability to introduce innovative products," Al-Faddagh said.

Petron remains bullish over its prospects despite the slight decline in its first-quarter profit.

BSP officials uncomfortable over growth of liquidity

By Michelle V. Remo

MONEY SUPPLY, AS MEASURED BY M3, sustained a growth level in March that monetary authorities consider uncomfortably high, as the rise in inflows from overseas Filipino workers and exports continued to be robust.

M3 grew by 24.6 percent to P2.927 trillion in March, faster than the 22.4 percent recorded the previous month, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

"The acceleration in the growth of domestic liquidity was due mainly to the increase in the net foreign asset position of depository corporations which, in turn, was traced to sustained inflows from remittances and export earnings," the BSP said in a statement.

Money supply is the quantity of money available within the economy to purchase goods, services and securities. Growth in money supply is a manifestation of increase in income, and therefore normally leads to increase in aggregate demand.

M3 is a broad measure of money supply that includes currencies in circulation, demand deposits, savings accounts, eurodollar deposits and repurchase agreements, among others.

Economists say exporters were experiencing higher earnings largely because of increasing demand for electronics, the Philippines' major export product. The exports sector was cited as one of the main drivers of the country's economic growth last year.

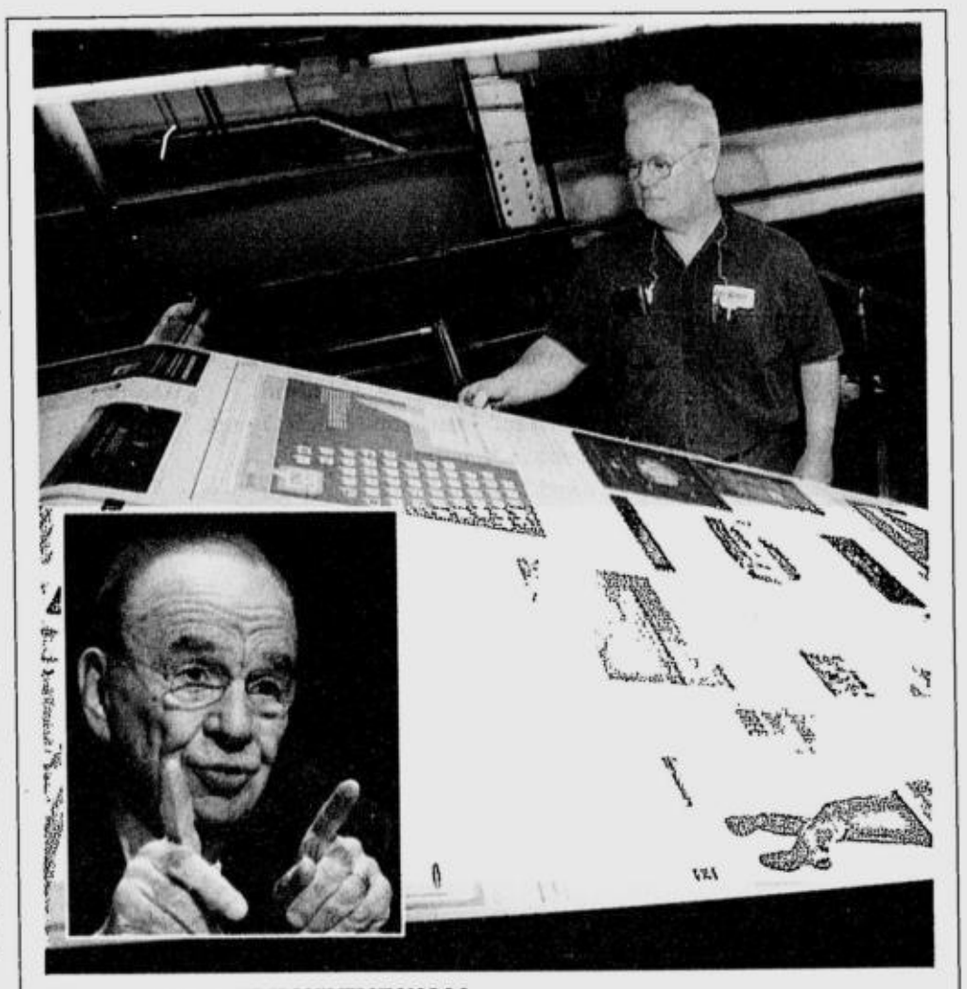
The increase in inflows of remittances is partly attributed to the higher income earned by overseas Filipino workers. The government said that professionals already accounted for a greater number of the OFWs, which were previously composed largely of domestic helpers and other low-income employees.

But while the increase in money supply could be seen as supportive of economic expansion, monetary authorities are wary of growth in domestic liquidity that is too high. They explained that an uncomfortably high growth in money supply could accelerate increase in consumer prices.

The BSP defines "comfortable level of liquidity growth" as one that is below 20 percent. The BSP said sustained year-on-year growth of money supply beyond 20 percent threatens the government's inflation targets.

The BSP, tasked to ensure inflation is kept within manageable levels, targets consumer prices to increase by only 4 to 5 percent this year from a year ago. For next year, the BSP has set its inflation target to 3 to 5 percent.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the growth in money supply was the reason the central bank's Monetary Board agreed to implement measures to mop up excess liquidity. The measures will take effect on May. 10.



RUPERT UP AGAINST THE WALL
A Wall Street Journal worker inspects the redesigned publication prior to its press run in this file photo taken last January. The News Corp. of Rupert Murdoch (inset) on Tuesday sparked a furor of speculation when the company offered to buy The Wall Street Journal for $60 per share, or $5 billion, from its publisher Dow Jones & Co. AP

Philcomsat officials appeal TRO, cite legal flaws

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COURT OF APPEALS DECISION TO stop majority shareholders from taking over Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC) from the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was "flawed," the company's president said on Friday.

In a briefing, PHC president Erlinda Ilusorio-Bildner said that the issuance of a temporary restraining order on the decision of the Makati Regional Trial Court allowing the takeover "was attended by legal infirmities."

"The Court of Appeals, particularly its 14th Division, was not made aware of the fact that the group of [PCGG nominee Enrique] Locsin filed an earlier petition with the Court of Appeals, and thus, is guilty of forum shopping," she said. "This is a ground for the outright dismissal of the case."

"The Bildner-Africa group's counsel has filed a motion to cure this defect, and [we] expect that justice and the rule of law will, this time, prevail," Bildner added.

Recently, Branch 138 of the Makati RTC issued a decision in an election contest filed by the Bildner-Africa group, declaring that the election of Locsin's government-backed group to the PHC board was invalid.

On April 24, 2007, the Bildner-Africa group held an organizational meeting, electing a new set of PHC directors: Victor Africa, Federico Agcaoili, Erlinda Bildner, Katrina Ponce-Enrile, Sylvia Ilusorio, Honorio Poblador III, Jose Ma. Ozamiz, Prudencio Somera Jr., Pablo Lobregat and Oliverio Laperal.

During the briefing, Bildner noted similarities in the way that government nominees ran PHC with the way the Enron corporate scandal unfolded in the United States.

She said that the financial condition of both firms were sustained by "systematic accounting fraud."

While Enron reported assets and profits that were inflated, PHC reported operating expenses as "advances to affiliates" which has the effect of understating losses.

"Both companies hide their losses," she said. "Both companies practice creative accounting and 'earnings management.'"

According to Bildner, PHC, along with its parent firms Philcomsat Holdings and the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. have lost a total of P2 billion under the reins of the PCGG-appointed board.

BSP to exempt GOCCs from tiering scheme

IN AN ATTEMPT TO MOP UP EXCESS liquidity that could accelerate inflation, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will exempt from the tiering scheme all deposits of state-owned firms to the central bank.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said this would encourage government-owned and -controlled corporations to park more of their funds with the BSP and, in the process, curb the growing liquidity in the system.

Under the BSP's tiering scheme implemented last November, deposits to the central bank in excess of P5 billion will be subject to interest rates lower than the key policy rate of 7.5 percent.

Specifically, the interest rates under the tiering scheme are: For deposits of P5 billion or less, 7.5 percent; deposits in excess of the P5 billion but not more than P10 billion, 5.5 percent; and those in excess of P10 billion, 3.5 percent.

The tiering scheme was implemented to encourage private banks to lend more rather than park their funds to the BSP. The anemic lending by banks, despite the growing savings, is partly blamed for the restrained growth in investments.

But the BSP said the concern on growing liquidity should also be addressed, and encouraging GOCCs to deposit their funds to the BSP would be one way to do so.

Apart from exempting the deposits of GOCCs from the tiering scheme, offering them an attractive interest rate on deposits would also encourage them to park their funds with the BSP, Tetangco said.

The BSP chief said the interest rate on deposits by GOCCs would be higher than what private banks could offer, and preferable than interest rates on government securities. But it would be lower than the BSP's 7.5-percent key policy rate.

The Monetary Board of the BSP decided that the exemption of GOCCs' deposits from the tiering scheme and the offering of an "attractive" interest rate would take effect on May 10. The BSP has yet to announce the exact figure of the interest rate.

Domestic liquidity, as measured by the M3, grew by 24.6 percent in March from a year ago. It was the ninth consecutive month that liquidity growth went beyond 20 percent.

The BSP said a comfortable level of liquidity growth was something below 20 percent. Without implementing corrective measures, the BSP said, liquidity might continue to grow beyond 20 percent and threaten the BSP's inflation targets.

M3 is a broad measure of liquidity and includes cash in circulation, demand deposits and securities, among others.

Liquidity growth—an indication of increase in consumer demand—is closely monitored by monetary authorities because of its impact on inflation.

Consumer prices increase if demand exceeds supply and, according to the BSP, liquidity growth beyond comfortable levels could push inflation to levels higher than targeted.

The BSP has set an inflation target of 4 to 5 percent this year, and 3 to 5 percent next year.

"(The) measures are intended to help prevent potential inflationary pressures that could build up over the medium term as a result of rapid money supply growth driven mainly by foreign exchange inflows," Tetangco said. *Michelle V. Remo*

IPVG unit takes on NYSE listed firm Salesforce.com as partner

THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND telecommunications unit of publicly listed IPVG Corp., IP-Converge Data Center Inc. (IPC), has partnered with New York listed Salesforce.com.

The partnership will strengthen the IPVG unit's managed services offerings in the Philippines and the rest of Asia, IPVG said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Under the agreement, IPC will promote Salesforce.com as part of its IT solutions and service offerings.

IPC will also be able to offer high level support to Salesforce.com customers worldwide.

In turn, IPC will be able to deploy Salesforce.com for IPVG subsidiaries.

Salesforce.com is a listed company at the New York Stock Exchange and a provider of on-demand business services in managing and sharing company sales, support, marketing and partner information.

Salesforce.com manages customer information for about 29,800 customers and 646,000 paying subscribers, including Advanced Micro Devices, America Online, Avis Budget Group Inc., Dow Jones Newswires, Polycom and SunTrust Banks. *Riza T. Olchondra*

'Text' messaging innovator picks RP over China, India

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE UK-BASED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY company that blazed the trail for the texting phenomenon worldwide, LogicaCMG, has opened an offshore delivery center in the Philippines, bypassing India and China.

Company officials said the center in Makati City will initially offer human resources, finance and accounting and SAP support. Later, it will add network maintenance and customer service to its list of offerings.

The Philippine center is expected to grow by six to seven percent in its first year.

The company also has offshore operations in India specializing in financial services. It looked around India, China and other prospective sites in Asia for its new site before finally choosing the Philippines.

"We are rapidly growing, and the first reaction was to add another site in India, but that would have exposed us to more risks, like putting all the company's eggs in one basket," Martin Blackburn, CEO, global service delivery at LogicaCMG, said in an interview.

"The Philippines, meanwhile, has a rich talent pool, has a lot of experience in outsourced services, has affinity with Western culture, and is strategically located near our customers in Australia and Asia," Blackburn added. "It will complement our existing operations in India, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Wales and Morocco, among other places."

Andrew de Cleyn, LogicaCMG's sales and marketing director for global service delivery, said LogicaCMG also went to China with British Prime Minister Tony Blair to check out the outsourcing market and found that China will soon consume all of its available labor sources in the near future, which could stunt LCMG's growth.

"The Philippines, however, is a different story," de Cleyn said. "There is a rich talent pool here, with affinity with Western culture, and a strategic location. We are also good for the Philippines because we can promote the country in Europe as an ideal offshore site."

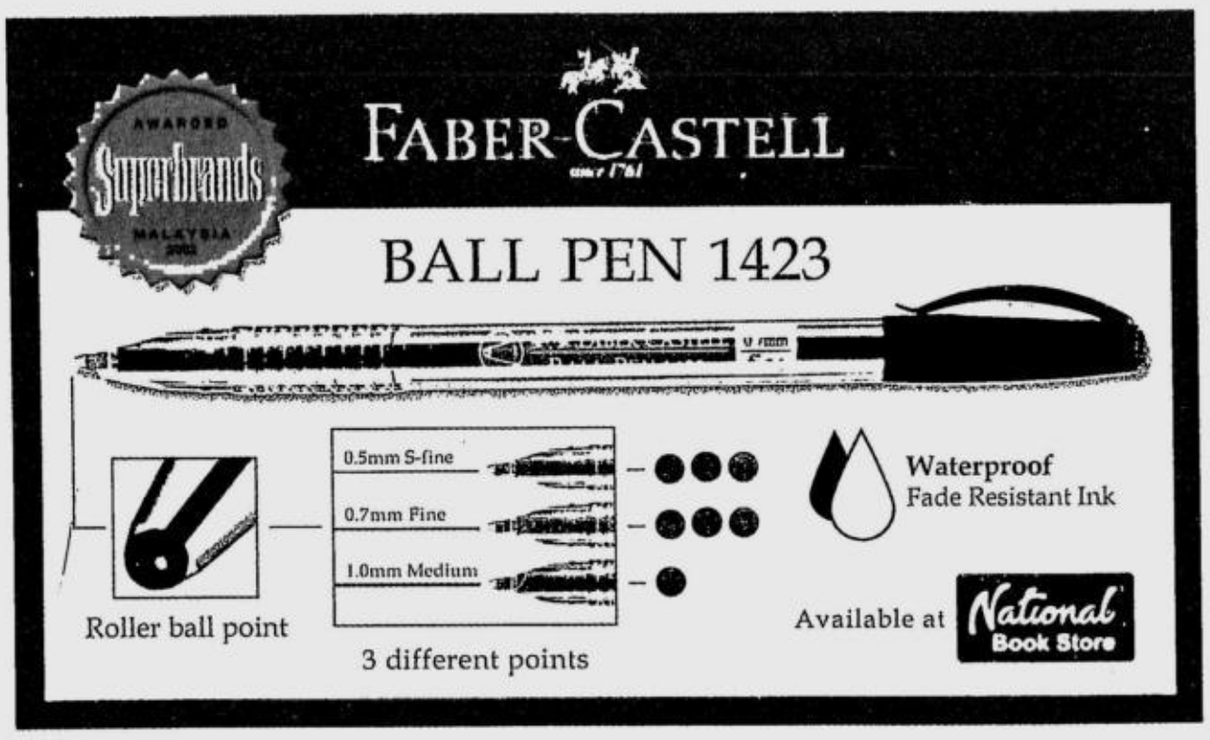
Blackburn and De Cleyn noted that the Philippines is still a "secret" in Europe, and that having LogicaCMG move more outsourcing work here would encourage other companies to follow suit.

De Cleyn said the "interesting industries" in the Philippines for LogicaCMG are still finance and telecommunications, but the market for procurement and SAP products are also growing fast.

"More and more high-value work will be delivered from the Philippines," Blackburn said.

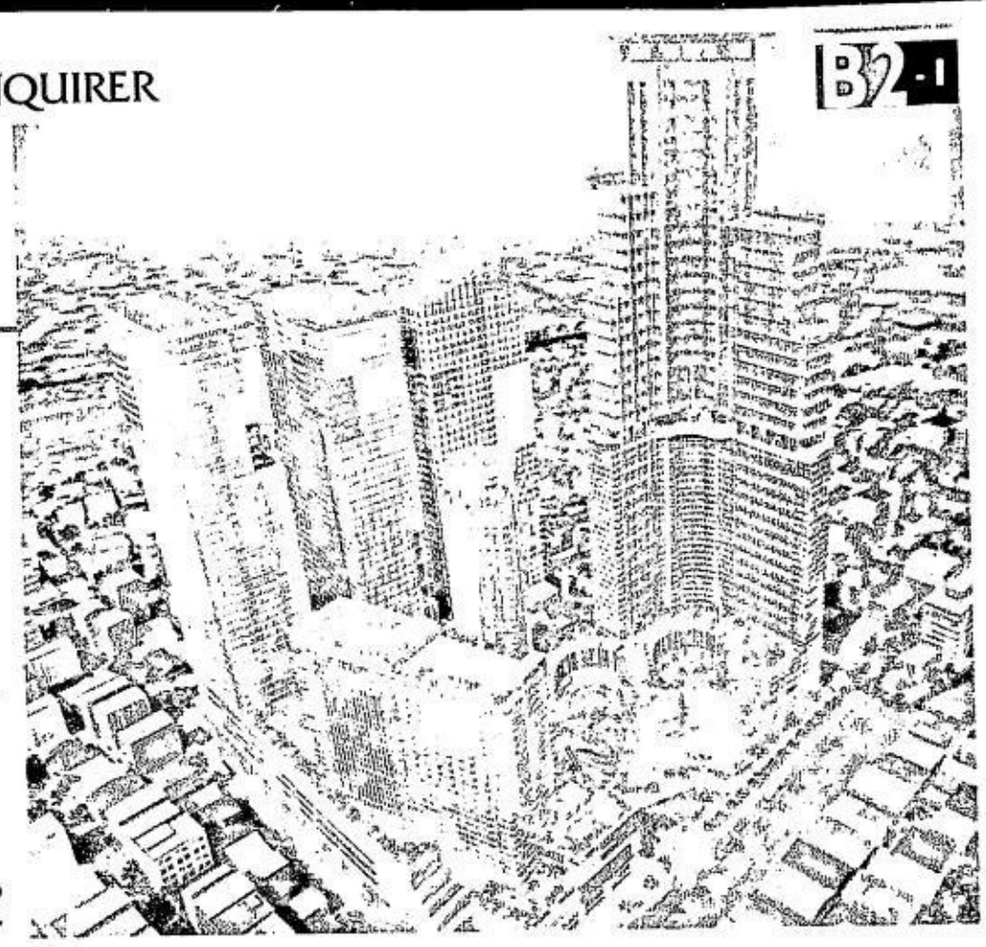
LogicaCMG says it created the text messaging system for two European operators who needed a quick way for their engineers to communicate on network problems. So LogicaCMG created a system that sits in a carrier's core network.

LogicaCMG officials said most, if not all, text messages in the country today are sent and received using the company's network solution.



PROPERTY

World's first 'Sky Park' eyed at Makati's Century City



THE 4.8-HECTARE Century City will be the country's first to implement high-rise green space in a grand scale.

By Charles E. Buban

THE LATEST ADD-ON TO lure buyers of high-end condos? Forest. Indeed, putting a roof over one's head is one thing, putting a forest or lush greenery on top of that roof is a far more complicated matter.

And when Century Properties wanted to transform the space above its latest development, the Century City, into a veritable oasis it turned to its design team, which includes the world-renowned Jon Adams Jerde of the Jerde Partnership International and the premiere Filipino architectural firm Palafox Associates.

According to Century Properties COO John Victor Antonio, while several developments here and abroad have attempted to create such high-rise green space in the past, this is the first time that it will be implemented in such a grand scale, calling it the Sky Park.

"The Sky Park is a proof of our desire to reintegrate nature into the dense urban landscape. We want to provide city dwellers with the organic environment that many of us grew up with," he said.

First to enjoy

The very first residents who will get to enjoy nature 36 stories above the ground will be the future unit owners of The Gramercy Residences, the first building to rise among Century City's cluster of residential towers.

Traditionally, activities and community interaction transpire at the ground level of residential high-rises where amenities are found. This, however, will change with the creation of the Sky Park.

The Sky Park will let these unit owners experience both the joys of being close to nature and the conveniences of city living as it will integrate three world-class swimming pools, cascading waterfalls, three distinct gyms, a yoga/Pilates room, spa and massage center, a THX theater with a DVD library, a day-care center, children's playground and many other amenities.

Another garden

"Not only in the top floor, we also have created another activity zone situated halfway up the towers that will give equally breathtaking views of Makati's skyline."

In a statement, master architect Jon Jerde agreed: "Landscaping is traditionally kept at the ground level. We are putting a higher dimensional approach to it, an interactive approach, through the Sky Park. This is why we have created terraces, patios and gardens on different levels that is innovative."

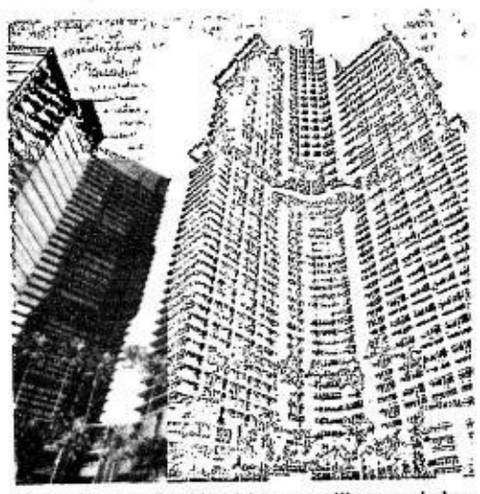
Esthetics may be the obvious reason for putting up rooftop gardens and above-ground greeneries but there are other reasons designers now consider such features to their high-rise developments. Both features reflect heat and help not only purify the air but also bring down the temperature of the surrounding areas.

More innovative amenities

And yet, the Sky Park is just among the innovative lifestyle amenities that can be enjoyed in Century City.

This 4.8-hectare, mixed-use development will offer fully fitted, fully furnished and fully serviced residences, the Philippines' very first "green" office buildings with bespoke interiors, a luxury hotel, a recreational club and an expansive and organic glassed-in lifestyle complex with world-renowned restaurants, retail shops, bars, dance clubs, cinemas, cafes and other entertainment attractions.

"They're all coming true at Century City, the evolutionary development of Century Properties that will soon rise on the last remaining piece of prime real estate in the very heart of the country's premier central business district," Antonio said.



THE GRAMERCY Residences will not only be the first building to rise among Century City's cluster of residential towers but will also be the first to feature the Sky Park.

PHOENIX LAND
DEVELOPER / LANDOWNER

Reel in the best years of your life...where things are always fresh.

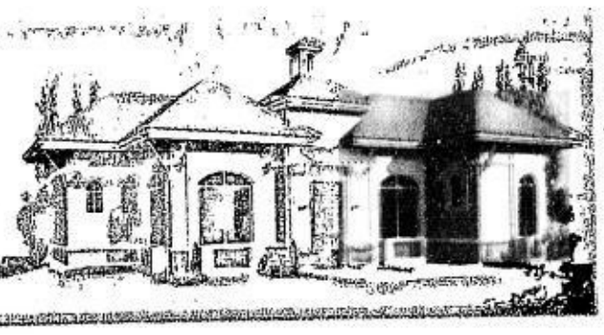
Your patience and perseverance have led you to a fine catch...

From breathing in the freshness of the cool country air, to reeling in the freshest rewards you've patiently waited for... Las Haciendas is it.

After all, no matter what life may offer you, you'd like to keep things fresh and exciting at all times. Like things will always be at your new home. Here at Las Haciendas.

LAS HACIENDAS

Preserving the values and traditions of typical Filipino towns, Las Haciendas boasts of 342 hectares of 21st century masterplanned, mixed-use nature communities. Las Haciendas Evergreen Communities is located at Laurel, Batangas, Taal's next-door neighbor.



The self-portrait in our surroundings

LAST WEEK, I SUDDENLY FELT CLAUSTROphobic in the room I had always worked in. The familiar space seemed too small; the size of my black bookshelf, overwhelming; and the art work that had hung on my wall for quite some time, now seemed too blue. I realized that I was simply longing to hang the red painting with the horses—my fire color and symbol—behind my table. That was what was causing this strange shift in perception of my personal space.

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Berenguer Asuncion

In these times when change is the only constant, we perpetually attempt to morph our spaces into meaningful assemblies that express our individuality. It is not by coincidence that we make these changes as we mark our milestones: during freshman year at the university; as newlyweds; at the birth of a new member in the family; the death of a spouse and the list goes on. Redoing one's intimate spaces allows us to purge old, depleted energies and exchange them with the exciting and the energizing. It allows us to reorganize, both physically and esthetically, externally and internally.

Good indicators

The visual elements in our space give it the emotional value we seek. The rhythm and harmony we create in our areas mirror what we are, what we want to feel, or aspire to be. I notice that the spaces of the people I work with are often good indicators of their states of heart and mind. Visually organized spaces are the product of highly organized persons; visually disturbing surroundings are the work of those going through a chaotic period. Harmonious spaces mark peaceful inhabitants; clean and quiet rooms are the creations of introspective and grounded individuals.

Did the space create the person, or did the person create the space? It works both ways, I think. A change in persona prompts a change of the environment, and the new environment in turn, supports the new persona and thrusts it fully into change. The refusal to move on to a new visual environment, in my observation, symbolizes a refusal to move on with the changes in one's life.

Fresh environment

Organizations are guided by the same principles. Companies renovate their workplaces to reflect their new brand or new work philosophy. A change in company direction is often not fully understood unless it is reflected through a change in the physical realm. The fresh environment does more than just eliminate the old—it is a constant reminder of the intangible changes and the new work culture.

A visually harmonious space is always uplifting. It has a positive impact on our daily lives and awakens other positive emotions that help us connect with our inner selves. A creative environment regenerates and prompts new ways of looking and doing things even in the seemingly non-creative fields.

For any individual, beauty in form and space takes the consciousness to a higher level and establishes a connection with a higher power. We make that connection to the eternal when we view a sunrise, or witness the changing colors of the sky at dusk. Nature is the true model of beauty, and we find that, as we see less of her, we seek the replication of her beauty in our built environment.

Eventually, we build the stories of our lives through our homes, our work places and other spaces. After all, our experiences may come to pass but we ultimately blanket ourselves with reminders of what we enjoyed seeing, feeling or being at significant moments. Ultimately, the wholeness of one's being impacts on his surroundings like a self-portrait. The portrait is most vivid and life-like when it includes images of the past, the present, as well as future hopes and wishes.

What is green architecture?

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL awareness and green architecture are catch phrases that suddenly seem to have flooded the media. It has become fashionable to be "green." This is good for the earth, but the wary reader should also note that this is starting to become a selling point for many things which are far from being truly "green."

Unfortunately, green architecture is being treated more like a fashion trend. The difference is that fashion trends are set subjectively, whereas the practice of green architecture is scientific.

Point of green architecture

Green architecture is not new. It has been resorted to before as a means of reducing building operating costs (such as energy consumption and maintenance), and its concepts also encompass the basic principles of having a healthy lifestyle. The former reduces the house/building's negative impact on the environment, while the latter ensures that the occupants' well-being (which may not only be limited to physical well-being) is also taken care of.

It is the role of the green architect to be able to meet these two objectives with as little compromise between protecting the earth and meeting human needs. The whole point of green architecture rests on accomplishing these two general objectives. Green architecture is proof that both man and his natural environment can live in perfect harmony.

Primary principles

In green architecture, there are five primary principles that include the subprinciples of this vast discipline. All topics related to green architecture fall under at least one of these.

• Energy efficiency

The green house/building has reduced dependence on electricity for its basic needs. The design allows for passive and active cooling, the maximum use of daylight and reduced need for energy-guzzling building systems.

A good test for a house or building's being green is its condition during a power shortage or blackout. Many of these would be extremely uncomfortable without air conditioning. Without artificial lighting, carrying out work inside would be impossible. The green house/building, however, would still be a functional home/office should the power go out, since its design process considered the principles of green architecture.

• Indoor air quality

The physical well-being of the occupants is the primary concern of this principle. Its area of concern is the general atmosphere within a house/building. For example, stale air is not healthy to breathe for long periods of time. Had the design of the house/building been better, such a problem could have been avoided. Hazardous building materials are also avoided by this principle.

• Green materials

This is directly concerned with the environment. After all, energy is not only measured by the electric meter that records power consumption. Green architecture also considers the use of material that will not waste energy in its production, transport and use in construction.

For example, though wood is a natural material, if we were to use wood from, say, the Amazon jungles for use in the Philippines, it being a natural, healthy material for use is outweighed by all of the energy wasted in exporting it all the way from South America. There is locally sourced wood available that is just as good.

Green materials also involve the use of nontoxic and renewable materials so that natural resources are not depleted, and vital rainforests denuded.

• Green building systems

This is a catch-all phrase that includes the various active design considerations that seek to monitor and reduce power consumption, water use, temperature, air quality, etc.

Examples of green building systems are photovoltaic cells, solar water heaters, low-flush water closets and fixtures and water recycling systems.

A good example of a green building system is a rainwater harvesting system. Rainwater is collected and stored. When needed, it is then pumped out for use. The rainwater can be used for flushing toilets and watering plants.

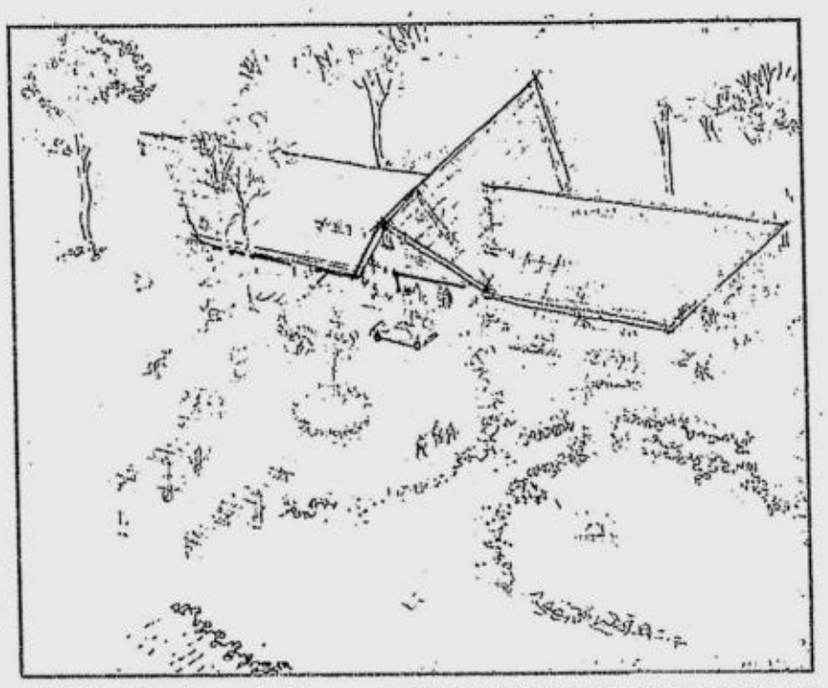
• Good design

Good design considers many aspects of green architecture. It also has many things in common with the other principles.

Good design, in the context of green architecture, is designing buildings which are easy to use, easy to convert for other uses, safe to use for both children and the elderly, etc.

Good design can also have an influence on energy usage, repair and maintenance, and inevitably, on the property's value.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.



GREEN architecture principles are applied in this Visitors' Center at the foot of Mayon Volcano in Legazpi City. Its passive design features include the use of locally sourced materials, natural ventilation, daylighting, rainwater harvesting system, porous paving and indigenous landscaping.

A.P. DE JESUS & ASSOCIATES—GREEN ARCHITECTURE

Tea time at The Manors Celebrity Place

NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY WHEN the first tea leaves were brewed. Legend has it that it all started with a Chinese emperor traveling through the woods of his vast empire. He had ventured to rest and ordered his servants to boil a pot of water for him. Just as the servants were putting the pot of water on top of the fire, a gusty wind blew, taking with it a bunch of dried leaves that immediately landed into the pot.

By the time the servants noticed this, the leaves had already steeped into the boiling water, lending it an amber hue. Since there was no time to boil another pot of water as the emperor was very thirsty, the servants supposedly served the amber liquid to their master. Fortunately, the emperor liked what he tasted and ordered his servants to serve this drink to him from then on. Thus, so they say, tea was discovered.

Tea party

Today, however, tea parties can be both simple and extravagant, depending on the occasion and desires of the host but with all the unifying elements—fine tea, some food and lots of conversation. A taste of the elegant tea party was brought to guests at the recently concluded open house event in DMCI Homes' The Manors at Celebrity Place in Diliman, Quezon City.

The tea party was held at the Portchester activity area of The Manors, where the day began with a Holy Mass. Afterward, a ceremonial handover of tea sets was conducted by DMCI Homes for the newly moved in residents of The Manors at Celebrity Place. To complete the tea party experience, a tea exhibit featuring various concoctions of herbal teas was also given by DMCI Homes, as well as a tea talk by party expert Noreen Belen who presented a lecture on how to mount a proper tea party.

THE TEA party was held at the Portchester activity area of The Manors at Celebrity Place.

The guests were treated to a buffet lunch wherein they sampled various dishes that would normally be served during low tea—sandwiches, pasta, crepes, and of course, Ceylon tea. While the guests were enjoying a leisurely lunch, classical music was performed by duo Guitarista Simpliciano. Children enjoyed as well with a clay art painting activity.

Automatic membership

The Manors at Celebrity Place is another prime community development of DMCI Homes that entitles the homeowner to an automatic membership to the exclusive Celebrity Sports Club.

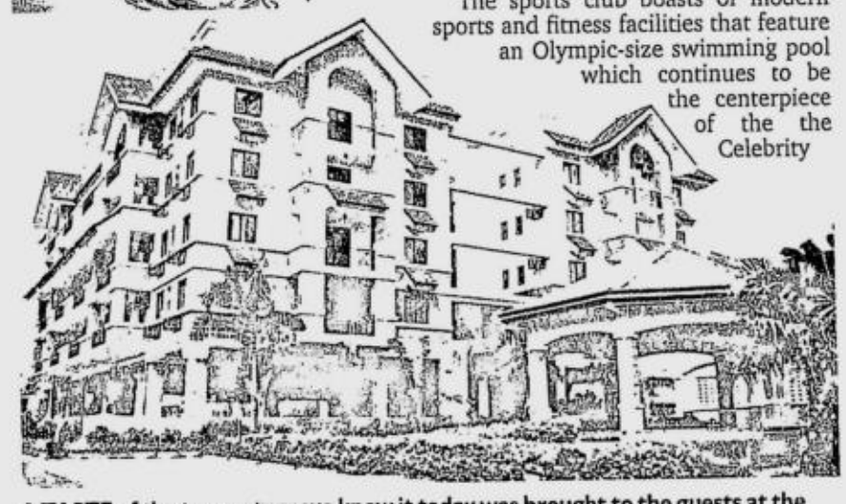
The sports club boasts of modern sports and fitness facilities that feature an Olympic-size swimming pool which continues to be the centerpiece of the the Celebrity Sports Club, indoor tennis, basketball covered court, badminton courts, 16-lane bowling center, an archery and fencing hall, the newly-built boxing ring for boxing aficionados, and the state-of-the-art gym. It also features a grand ballroom which is ideal for weddings, debuts and club-produced shows, two fine-dining restaurants and business centers. Homeowners can enjoy all of these fantastic amenities with just a very minimal monthly fee.

Quality workmanship

Living in The Manors at Celebrity Place spells convenient location and proximity to the top universities in the country such as Ateneo and UP Diliman, leisure areas, places of worship, key government institutions and different hospitals. This means you are never too far away from anything and anyone.

The Manors bear the trademark of the quality workmanship of DMCI Homes. Spacious living spaces coupled with the clean lines of the buildings, lots of open spaces, drying and storage areas—all make for a relaxing abode amid the largest city in Metro Manila. DMCI Homes is the only Triple-A builder/developer that provides premium quality, urban friendly, fully serviced communities for the young families with modest income aspiring to live in comfort with the conveniences of the city.

For information, call hotline 888-3333 or visit the model units of The Manors located at the ground floor of Celebrity Club (formerly Celebrity Sports Plaza) main lobby on Capitol Hills Drive, Old Balara, Diliman, Quezon City or log on to www.dmci-homes.com.



A TASTE of the tea party as we know it today was brought to the guests at the recently concluded open house event in DMCI Homes' The Manors at Celebrity Place in Diliman, Quezon City.

THE SAPPHIRE RESIDENCES BREAKS GROUND

G&W Architects, the pioneer of the architect-led Build-to-Own system, holds the groundbreaking of The Sapphire Residences at Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. Located in the prime Crescent West area, sandwiched between Manila Golf and the 2.8-hectare Crescent Park, the tower is the fifth from architects who love the buildings they build. G&W's B-T-O system is the fastest to complete and has the most reliable track record in terms of on-time delivery. The groundbreaking/time capsule rite was led by G&W's chief executive architect Daniel Terence O. Yu, sixth from left, with the G&W project management executives, general contractor New Golden City Builders (NGCB) and construction manager Asian Technicon.

Federal Land to unveil Bay Garden's Palawan Tower

FOLLOWING THE UNPRECEDENTED SUCcess of Bay Garden's Mactan Tower, Federal Land Inc. has announced plans to unveil the fifth structure of the sprawling residential condominium complex: The Palawan Tower.

Highlighting its offer of a resort-inspired lifestyle, the Palawan Tower joins Federal Land's exquisite array of top condominium residences in Bay Garden: Mactan, Anchor Bay, Boardwalk Bay and Crystal Bay towers. These residences compose Federal Land's Bay Garden—a high-rise community within the master-planned 40-hectare Metropolitan Park in the historic Manila Bay.

Boasting of world-class amenities, intelligent design, perfect location, and most of all, an impeccable view of the sunset, the Palawan Tower serves as a perfect home to families, expatriates and notably, retirees from abroad who wish to settle in Manila.

Life outside one's doorstep

"These people are already used to the comforts of world-class living. Now that they have retired, they want to experience the best of both urban and suburban life, which can be seen in Manila. Despite being an old city, Manila remains vibrant because of its business and commercial districts. Here, people can enjoy a lifestyle that they've always dreamed of and deserve," said Imee Francisco, Federal Land AVP for product planning.

Indeed, all the comforts of living are just outside the doorstep of this high-rise address. Just around the corner is the popular Blue Wave commercial center with its intimate brand of entertainment; a stone's throw away is the colossal Mall of Asia with its many shops and entertainment stores; a few minutes' drive is the Adriatico Circle and Malate district, with its bohemian color and flavors.

Enhancing life by the bay

Palawan Tower will have 16 levels on one podium which it will share with adjacent towers. There will be a total of 145 units classified into flats and bi-level units with a P4 million and up price range. Similar to the existing towers, condo dwellers of Palawan Tower will enjoy first-rate amenities at the podium such as a free-form outdoor swimming pool, children's wading pool, outdoor playground, 12 poolside gazebos and a steam room. And from the units' own lanai or balcony, a view of the stunning Manila Bay beckons.

Experience the charm of living by the bay through easy, light-weight payment terms and affordable deals - premium living that gives value to your hard-earned money. Call Bay Garden at 551-0888 or e-mail inquiry@federal-land.com.ph for more information.

THE CAPTIVATING sunset of Manila Bay

BAY Garden's new Palawan Tower, developed by Federal Land, rises in Manila to offer a resort-inspired lifestyle and perfect home for families.

SM City Naga breaks ground

NAGA CITY MAYOR JESSE ROBREDO and SM Prime Holdings president Hans T. Sy recently shared honors in the groundbreaking ceremony of SM City Naga in Camarines Sur.

Located along the entrance of the Central Business District 2 (CBD 2) Road beside the PNR railway, the mall is scheduled to open during the last quarter of 2008. The land area of the mall, which will be SM's first mall in the Bicol region, consists of two adjoining lots with a total of 44,279 square meters.

The groundbreaking ceremony began with an invocation and blessing by Msgr. Jose Roxas, the Auxiliary Bishop of Caceres. It was highlighted by a capsule laying ceremony, in which a national and local daily of that day and the mall's floor plan were imbedded for future generations..

Warm welcome

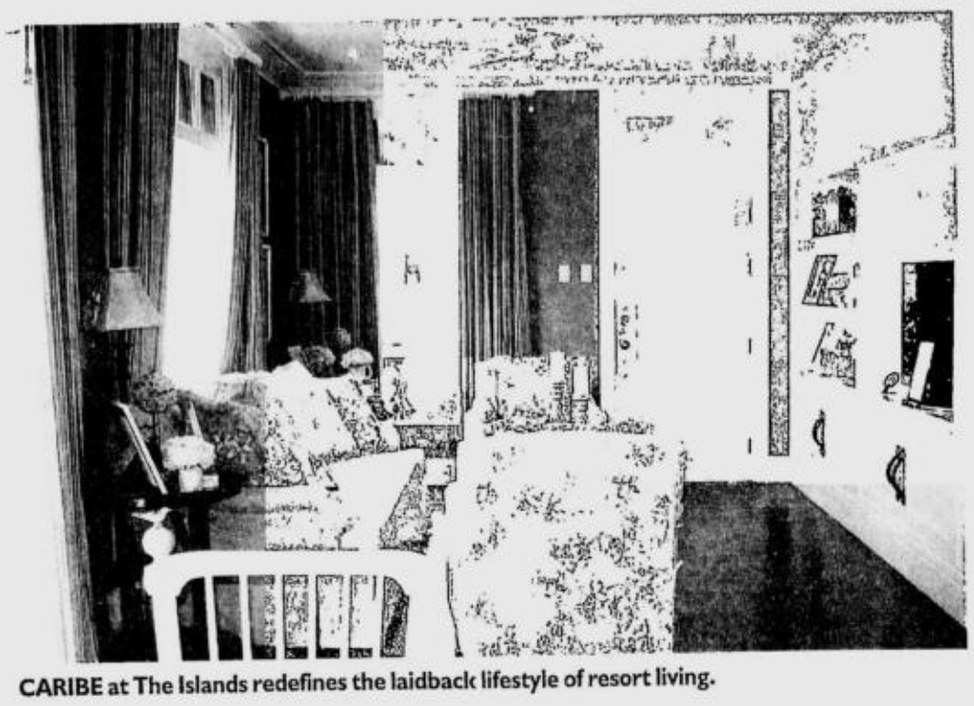
In his welcome remarks, Sy acknowledged that "Naga City is really growing. We feel a lot of growth potential here. Our experience in putting up malls around the country has showed us that we enhance, rather than eat up the market. Before Christmas, we hope to be here with a warm welcome from Naga City."

Mayor Jesse Rebredo, on the other hand, said, "We cannot express the joy and optimism of having an SM Mall here in the region. We are the regional center of commerce and trade, and despite difficulties in the city we are giving 5,000 jobs a year and growing by leaps and bounds. By building a mall in Naga, SM is giving opportunities for employment for its residents."

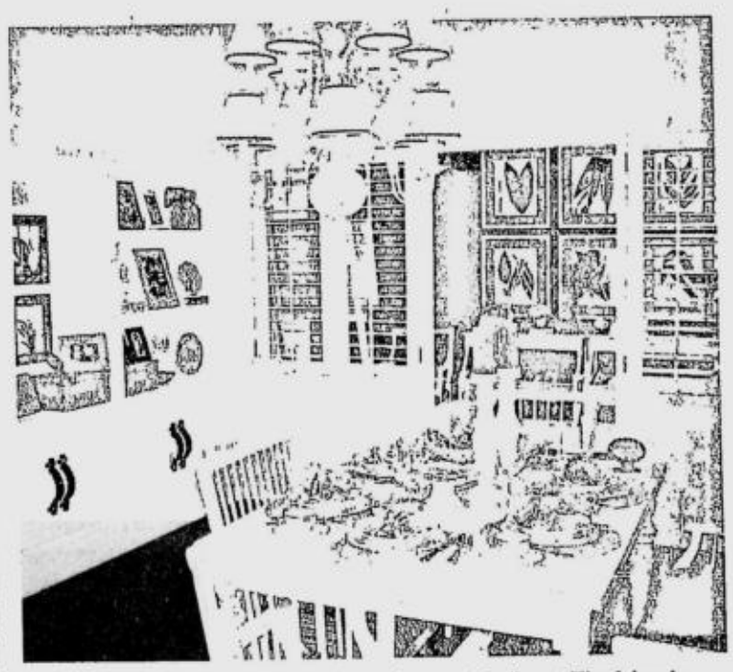
Guests

Also present during the groundbreaking ceremony were Naga City Vice Mayor Gabriel Bornado Jr., city council members Lourdes Asense, Salvador Castillo and John Bongat, Naga City Investment Board executive director; Metro Peso manager Florencio Mangoso Jr. and barangay chair Daniel Alhambra.

Joining them from the SM side were Shopping Center Management Corp. president Annie Garcia, Engineering EVP Antolin Paule, Vice President for Leasing Daisy Chua, and AVP for Engineering Fides Garcia. The property owners Romy Tan and Tomas Enrile were also present.



CARIBE at The Islands redefines the laidback lifestyle of resort living.



ENJOY the colors of summer all year long at Caribe at The Islands.

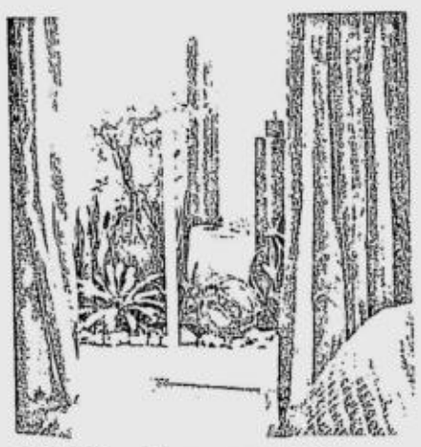
Brittany swings to the rhythm of life with Caribe at The Islands

AS THE SUMMER SUN SHINES brightly over the horizon, the islands beckon for a true retreat. Just south of Manila is a unique enclave by maverick real estate developer Brittany Corp. where every waking moment is a vacation, and the vivid colors of summer both soothe and add spice to life.

Caribe at The Islands is where the leisurely life truly resides. Located on Governor's Drive in Dasmariñas, Cavite, it is accessible via Aguinaldo Highway, Molino Boulevard, Southwoods of Carmona Interchange through the South Luzon Expressway. A part of a 130-hectare development called The Islands, Caribe is designed to groove to its residents' own special rhythm.

What Caribe is about

"Caribe is about experiencing a lazy Sunday morning every single day of the week. It is about watching the sunset, kicking back and relaxing under the sun with a drink in one hand and a book in the other. It is about lush greens, bright oranges and sunshine yellows! Here, life is truly at a different rhythm. One cannot imagine a life more leisurely than this!" Brittany president Jing Serrano enthused.



GREENS and flowers greet your mornings via a pocket garden at the master's bedroom.

A wide range of home styles were developed to accommodate the varied tastes and preferences of the homeowners. The single-story sprawling homes offer an open floor plan for the luxury of space. The two-story homes offer more rooms with greater size for relaxing in privacy. The Duettos are duplex homes made for families who are starting out in life.

Amenities

Among the amenities is a leisure and lifestyle area called the Paseo Park. It offers various sports and recreational facilities including basketball and tennis courts, picnic grounds and parks. Eventually, it will also include a free form pool and playground.

Also within the grounds is St. Paul's College which provides quality education from grade school to high school levels.

"We all dream of living in a resort—soaking up the sunshine and watching the world go by with hardly a care. That is what Caribe at The Islands offers—a life of leisure spiced up by vivid colors and the music of the wind," Serrano said.

Brittany is a maverick real estate developer of innovative and creative lifescapes. Its eclectic and vibrant portfolio includes Brittany Bay, CrossWinds, Portofino, Georgia Club, The Islands and Mosaic at Greenbelt. With master-planned communities steeped in character, stylistic and thematic appeal, rich architectural details and excellent craftsmanship, it successfully and continuously reinvents the local real estate landscape.

SUMMER blooms in every nook and cranny at the Caribe at The Islands.

For inquiries and property previews, please call 850-2868 or 850-3084, or visit www.brittany.com.ph.

SM Prime Holdings president Hans Sy joins Mayor Jesse Robredo during the groundbreaking ceremony of SM City Naga.

St. Luke's Bonifacio Global City construction now in full swing

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW St. Luke's Medical Center healthcare facility in Bonifacio Global City is now in full swing. The three-tower St. Luke's Bonifacio Global City stands on a 1.6-hectare property located within Fort Bonifacio. It consists of a 16-story hospital, a 10-story Medical Arts Building, and a 5-story Energy Center.

"St. Luke's Bonifacio Global City was conceived by men and women at the forefront of technological innovation, clinical healthcare, hospital operations and financial management. It has state-of-the-art medical facilities and clinics aimed at complementing St. Luke's medical facility in Quezon City in serving patients from the southern and eastern zones of the metropolis," said Jose G. Ledesma, St. Luke's president and CEO.

Facilities

Tower 1 will have 600 patient-beds while the Medical Arts Building will house 374 luxurious doctors' clinics as well as lounges and concession areas. The towers will be connected by an equally grand podium designed to make patients and visitors feel the ambience of a first-class healthcare institution.

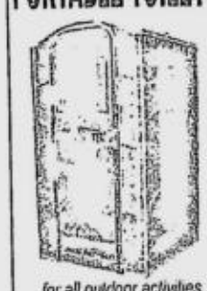
St. Luke's Bonifacio Global City is designed by RRPayumo+Partners, one of the country's top 10 architectural firms. Its clients include Ayala Greenfields Golf and Leisure Clubhouse, Camp John Hay, the Discovery Center at Ortigas Center and Marco Polo Hotel Davao. The building contractor for St. Luke's new healthcare facility is Makati Development Corp.-First Balfour Joint Venture (MDC-FV JC). MDC is a wholly owned subsidiary of real estate giant Ayala Land Inc. First Balfour, a fully owned subsidiary of the Lopez's First Philippines Holdings Corp., is a Triple A-rated firm in general engineering and building and ISO 9001:2000 certified.

St. Luke's Bonifacio Global City is set to operate in 2009.

"The construction of our Bonifacio Global City facility is in line with St. Luke's vision to be one of the top 5 medical institutions in Asia by 2010," Ledesma said.

ARCHITECT'S perspective of St. Luke's Bonifacio Global City, which is set to open in 2009.

New PORTABLE TOILETS



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Homelite makes Manhattan Garden City fastest selling condo project today

FOR THOSE SEEKING TO MAKE A MOVE INto a stylish condominium in the city, Megaworld Corp. recently introduced a home loan called Homelite that made first-time homebuyers, overseas-based Filipinos and investors sit up and literally take notice.

Its strategic central location at the Araneta Center, the full backing of the Araneta Group and leading residential and office condominium developer Megaworld, and its status as a pilot project for Homelite, proved an irresistible mix for investors. As a result, Manhattan Garden City has already sold as of end-March 135 units out of 480, about 33 percent of Tower 2's total inventory since it was launched only last February. Tower 1 was sold out last January.

"This is a phenomenal record in real estate sales," noted Megaworld Central Properties president Anthony Charlemagne Yu. "The various project components of Manhattan Garden City came together and really captured the attention of people," he added.

Lowest interest rates

Homelite is a result of Megaworld's close partnership with Security Bank. It offers the lowest interest rates in the market, going as low as 5.50 percent annually for a five-year term. It also has the longest period of fixed interest rate for 25 years, at 11 percent. This addresses the need of the middle-income market and of foreign-based Filipinos for affordable home loan facilities.

"These are the lowest interest rates in the market today. We also have payment plans that offer low monthly amortization. Of course, with Megaworld's strong track record as a reliable property company definitely makes Manhattan Garden City a top choice for investors, homebuyers and overseas Filipinos," Yu declared.

MANHATTAN Garden City's Tower 1 (right, now sold out) and Tower 2 make up the country's top-selling residential condominium project today.

A TWO-BEDROOM corner unit with balcony is highly affordable, as low as P25,650 monthly only at Manhattan Garden City.

Affordable

First-time homebuyers need not break their monthly budgets. With Homelite, they can stretch their home loan to 10 and even 25 years to pay, with low interest rates from 8.5 to 11 percent annually. At that rate, the 22.5-square-meter studio unit comes out at a very affordable P10,847 monthly. "The one-bedroom and two-bedroom units are also highly affordable with Homelite. These units are ideal for families who are just starting out, or for up and coming young executives who need more room," he added.

As for investors, they can take advantage of the five-year loan term at no down payment, with the lowest interest rate of 5.5 percent annually.

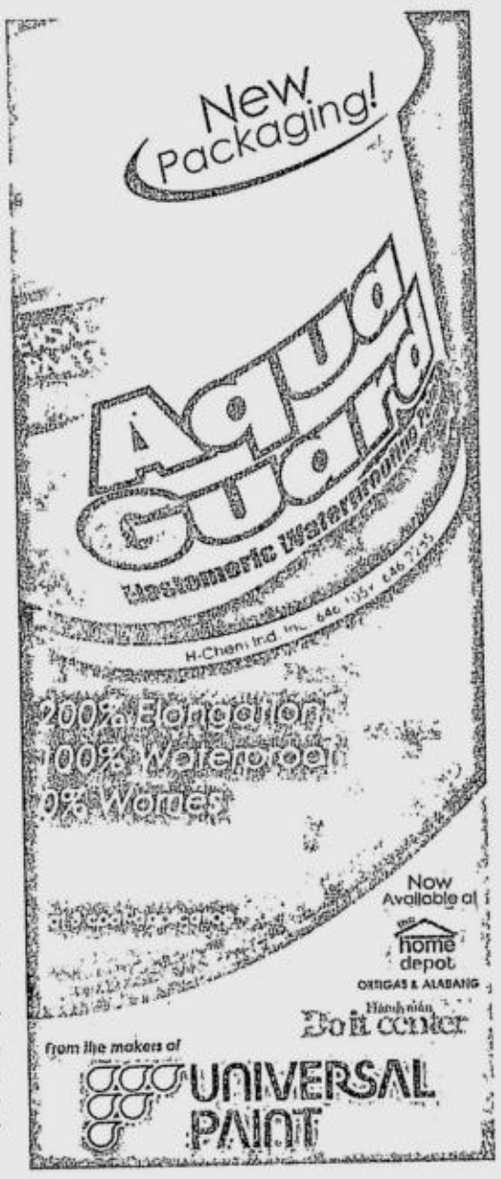
MANHATTAN Garden City's retail arcade will complement the vibrant mix of shopping and service choices within the Araneta Center.

"Homelite is a revolutionary payment scheme for investors and homebuyers to acquire this choice real estate. It has certainly changed the rules and started addressing the market's need for both low-interest and long-term financing. From our interviews with buyers and investors, they chose Manhattan Garden City precisely because the locked-in rates give them peace of mind they won't find in any other real estate project or bank loan," he said.

Garden-inspired

Manhattan Garden City is the result of a partnership between the Araneta Group and Megaworld. It is the country's first-ever garden-inspired, transit-oriented community connected to two existing mass-transit systems—the LRT-2 and MRT-3. Manhattan Garden City takes its inspiration from New York's world-famous skyline itself, and as for the "garden" aspect of the name, it bears the promise of a home surrounded by nature's beauty while still in the heart of the city with everything within your reach.

To find out how you can take advantage of Homelite's very low interest rates now, visit the Manhattan Garden City showroom at the third level of Gateway Mall. You may also call 810-3333 or e-mail inquire@themanhattangardencity.com.



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Renovating homes to resist heat

By Tessa R. Salazar

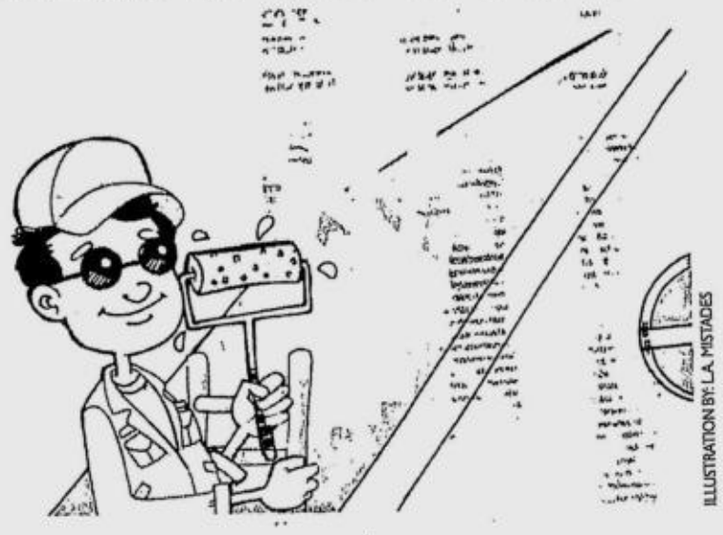


ILLUSTRATION BY: L.A. MISTADES

A STUDY CONDUCTED AT the UP Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology's College of Science reveals some of the hottest places in Metro Manila. (INQUIRER, 5/3/07) Can simple home renovations or home designs help dissipate the summer heat? For those who do or do not have the budget, architects and home designers offer these suggestions.

Architect Amado de Jesus, founding chair of the Green Architecture Movement, stresses that one should not let heat to build up in one's home in the first place.

"A simple way that has a big effect is choosing light colors for the roof such as white and beige. Not so many people know this but heat bounces off white. This has been proven in so many studies," he says.

He adds that one should put insulation on the underside of the roofing, and not above the ceiling.

He also urges that one should ensure the air inside the ceiling can flush out to prevent the buildup of heat.

De Jesus adds that homeowners should block the sun before it enters the room. "People are fond of using blinds and drapery, but this is not as effective as roof overhangs or sun shades."

Cross ventilation

De Jesus stresses the principle of cross ventilation, which guarantees continuous flow of air inside the house. He cited, as an example, openings below the window.

"Make sure there's cross ventilation, let night air come in to cool interiors," he quips.

The engineering division of Moldex's planning and design department recommends that homeowners open adjacent windows and doors to keep the air flowing inside the house, stressing that cross ventilation is a good alternative to air conditioning.

Moldex also says the basic standard in house design always factors in good ventilation. This can be observed through proper orientation and location of doors and windows.

Architect Boy Morcilla, vice president of Steel Building Systems and Technologies, says those who wouldn't want to spend for an air conditioner may choose to install two fans on two sides of the wall—one for air intake and the other for air exhaust. He adds that the location of the air intake should be on the side where cooler air circulates during summer.

Another inexpensive way is diverting relatively cleaner wastewater from the kitchen and bathroom to use in sprinkling the pavement or ground immediately surrounding house.

High ceilings

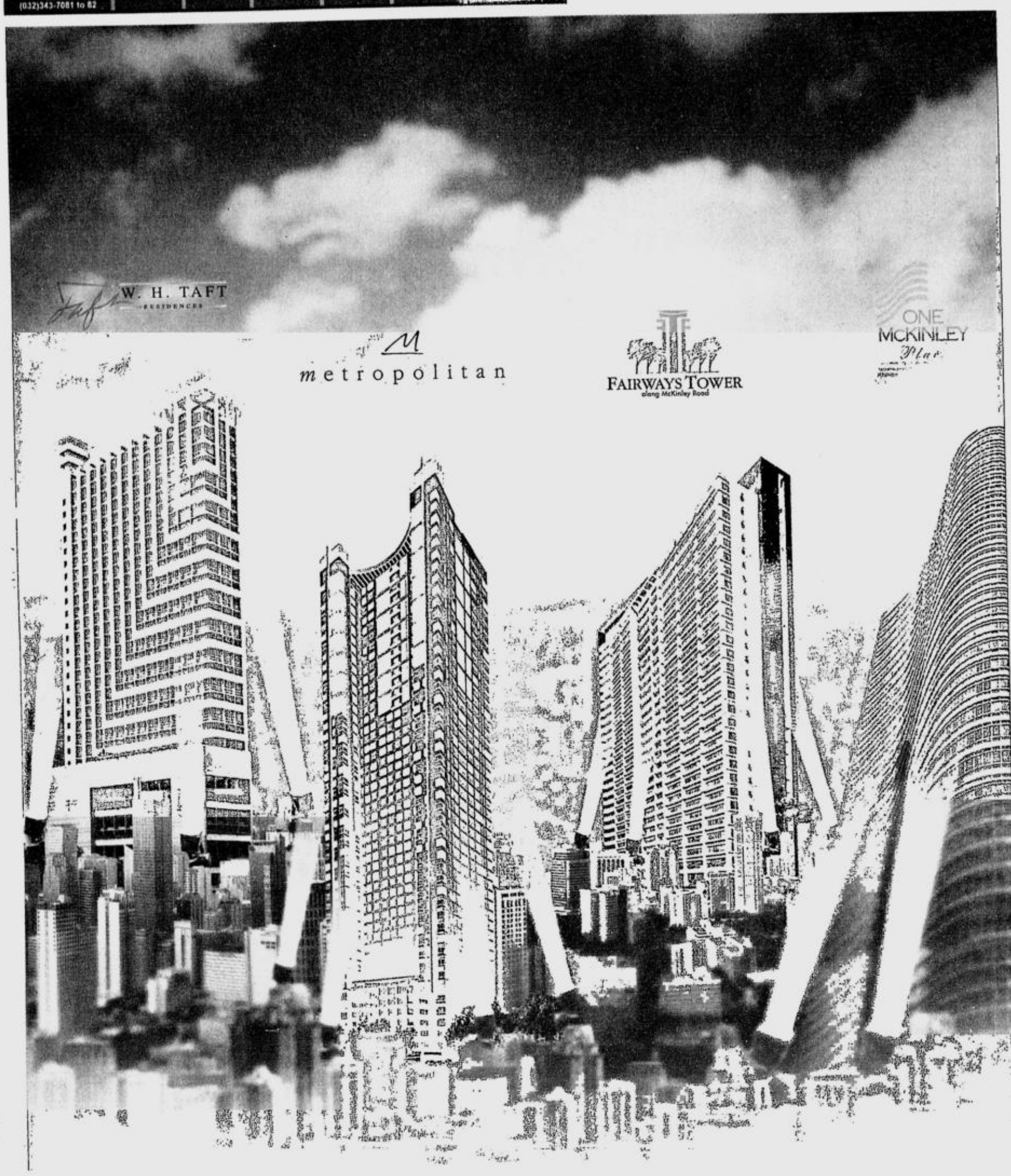
According to Moldex's planning and design department, high ceilings are not just for esthetics. This may create an illusion of space and is very good for air circulation.

Moldex cites some of its model houses, which uses high windows not just to emphasize a part of the house but also for good ventilation.

Moldex adds that as much as possible, owners should use compact fluorescent lights. It produces less heat than ordinary lighting fixtures. Turn off the lights when not in use as any light source produces heat.

For large areas, water features such as ponds absorb the heat of the sun. Concrete pavements, on the other hand, can redirect the heat to the home.

And for homeowners to feel cool inside and out, landscaping is essential. Cool colors, especially green, are mentally and physically relaxing. Landscape adds texture to houses, and makes a house look enticing to live in.



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SPADEWORK STARTS FOR EDSA GRAND CONDO

Edsa Grand Realty and Development Corp. recently held a groundbreaking ceremony to launch the start of construction and preselling of its 30-story residential and commercial condominium development in Quezon City. From left are Quezon City 4th district Rep. Nanette Castelo Daza, Almeda Niu of Best Builder Construction, Patrick Tai of Edsa Grand Residences, Barangay Chair Ignacio Santiago and Best Builder Construction vice president Cesar Tan.

Editor **Pam Pastor**
Creative Director **Tim Yap**

Supplement

Remark

Mark Bautista leaps to **LE FROGE**
page C2

Ram Sagad and Patty Ortega bring home the tuna in this year's **Century Superbods** page C3

Gino de la Paz uncovers the emerging **Pinoy Soul Movement**
page D1

Produced and styled by TIM YAP
Photography: RAMON MANGILA
Sittings Editor: DAVID MILAN
Grooming: JOHN PAGADUAN OF SHU UEMURA
Cover Star: MARK BAUTISTA

Red Ribbon

This May Cake

Tiramisu Meltdown

Whatever the celebration. It's more beautiful with a Red Ribbon

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Promo period: May 1 to 31, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1450, Series of 2007.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Soldier of Fortune

By Paolo Lorenzana

A SOB STORY CAN ONLY GET YOU SO far. Even if it's the sort of Made-for-TV drama that warrants an episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya"—like how a country boy named Mark Bautista spent his high school downtime belting out oldies in smoky piano bars just to help his sickly dad pay the bills. Or how he boarded a dingy cargo ship from Cagayan de Oro, embarking for the big city with dreams vested in a franchised boob tube reality contest that promised to make him a Star for a Night.

That Maalaala episode entitled "Barya" aired in April of 2004—a year after Bautista seized the 'runner-up' title behind paradigm of sugary wholesomeness, Sarah Geronimo. And along with the first whiff of a recording studio and the shrill scream from a teen fan, what was first savored when that starry night had passed were how his concerns of putting food on the table had drifted away with it. "*Dati kasi nung* first album *ko, sobrang* happy *na ako*. And then *nung nagka*-second and third album, *sobrang* bonus *na yun para sa akin. Maraming nagbago—naisip ko na may kapalit yung hirap na dinanas namin*," Mark explains of how the contest turned him into a sort of man-of-the-night right before the public.

The Mark of Maturity

But then a night is never enough when stardom's on the line and neither is three years trailing as a perpetual runner-up behind reality colleagues Sam Milby and Christian Bautista. Though a few albums have been churned out (all gold), films have been made (all non box-office) and touring has brought him to places he'd never even dreamed of with the trickle of international fans camping out in hotel lobbies, it doesn't help being known as the 'other' Bautista to a more cultivated one whose albums have all been platinum, whose films have prospered, and whose Indonesian fans are as crazy for him as his legion of *colegialas*.

Even if the cargo ship is a stark difference to the grooming chair he's slouching in, Mark needed to cease reveling in the ticking 15-minute clock of fame and get off the reality talent conveyor belt—to tuck that wide smile in a bit and get down to business. "*Yung* first album *ang pinaka*-memorable *para sa akin dahil sa* excitement *na naramdaman ko nung pumasok ako sa* recording studio, *pero iba na yung feeling ko ngayon. Hindi lang basta pakanta-kanta lang sa* studio, *mas*-particular *na ako*," he says.

Coin-Operated Boy

Despite the proliferation of covers, 'Every now and Then,' Bautista's fourth release is an album of choice. One where the singer is conscious of everything from arrangements to what songs he'll get so sing, which backtrack to his days struggling in an all-boy group trilling renditions of Earth, Wind & Fire. Besides, when roughly four years have passed since SFAN—desperation shifting into ambition—there had to be a time to re-evaluate things. "Thinker *ako na tao*," he says, chin resting on clasped hands. "*Magugulat nalang yung tao—ang tahi-tahimik ko sa isang gilid at marami akong iniisip. Marami akong* fears—what if *nawala 'to? Anong gagawin ko* after showbiz?"

The pity party has long exceeded its expiry date and eventually, the determination that brought him to Manila has to turn into something more than Mark being able to live comfortably in his house in Commonwealth or donning the free threads he gets from endorsing a brand like Le Froge. What used to be the superstitious reliance on a coin to absorb his negative energy during performances has to turn into sheer talent; where 'Pop Heartthrob' gains more substantive distinction than being a piece of ballad-steeped eye candy for shrieking schoolgirls. "If ever *mawala ako, dapat may maiwan ako na talagang* remarkable," he says, casting an expansive smile. "*Gusto ko talaga gumawa ng kanta para maalala nila na 'O, si* Mark Bautista *yan'. Lahat naman 'to* temporary—*na kahit* feeling *mo maraming pumapalakpak sa 'yo at sikat ka na ... matatapos rin yan. Hindi* forever *na lalabas ka sa* stage *at ganun kalakas ang palakpak mo.*"

Mark will focus on the music, 'cause that's what got him here in the first place. Not his baby-faced mug or the adversity in a life that shifted from struggle to fortune. Maybe an album or two later, he might even be able to sing that original song center stage Araneta—the pinnacle of his dreams being fulfilled. Then maybe the applause will never have to end.

The newest face of Le Froge will focus on his music, 'cause that's what got him here in the first place.

Produced and styled by TIM YAP
Photography: RAMON MANGILA
Sittings Editor: DAVID MILAN
Grooming: JOHN PAGADUAN OF SHU UEMURA
All clothes by Le Froge

A Guide to Recognizing Mark Bautista

FROM music to fashion, Mark Bautista shines

Cam it up for the World's Largest Photo Album

TIM YAP posing beside his photo contribution, titled, 'Liquid Dreams.'

By Pepe Diokno

NOTHING RESPRESENTS THIS GENERATION more than the sweet sight of self-portraits. Digital cameras, camera phones, and Multiply have made picture-taking part of kids' lives to the point that clueless 4-year-olds pose gamely for photographs; to the point that "Model" is the title teenage girls and boys take on while they pimp their MySpace pages with pictures of themselves in braces.

But it isn't all that bad. Pictures are the new and improved words; in them are vivid images of life that sometimes words cannot do justice to. Pictures last lifetimes, and better than words, they will be testament to future generations of how *fugly* we all looked in the 00's.

But seriously, one important thing pictures have over words is that they can be touched, felt, and passed around. Emotion permeates one's skin fastest through the wonders of the printed photograph.

It's a pity, though, that people are forgetting this. Yes, there probably isn't anything cooler than a Facebook album, but printed photos are treasures.

SINGER Agot Isidro talking about her photo contribution—an image of her 'boys' husband Manu Sandejas with their two dogs.

FRANCIS Magalona shows his affection to his photo contribution.

Print it like it's hot

That's what Kodak is trying to remind us of as it guns for the records by erecting the world's largest photo album (not a metaphor for EDSA and the billboards that pollute it).

A few peeps you might know have already contributed to this album, among them, Tim Yap, Francis M, Sam Oh, and Lino Cayetano.

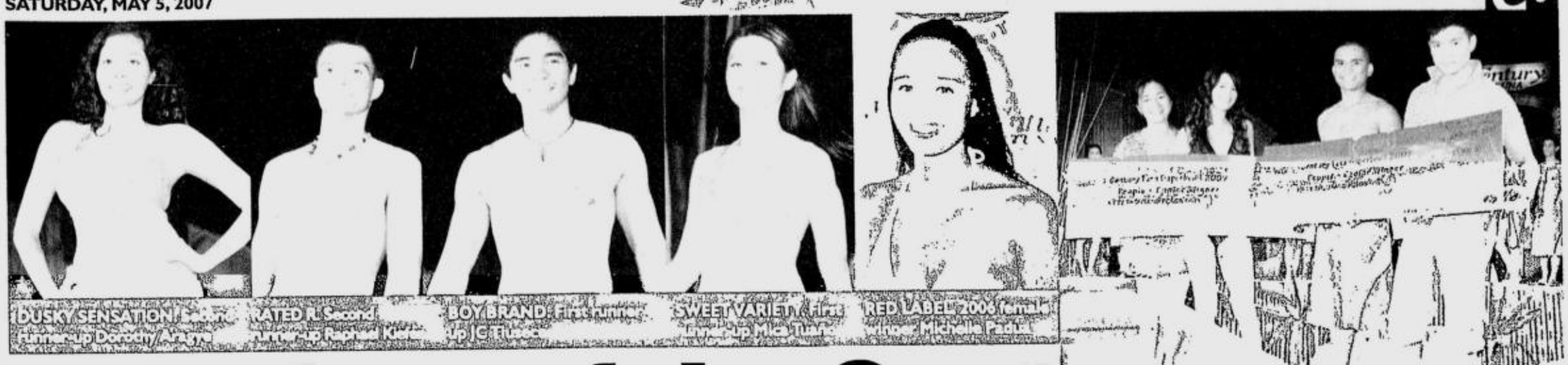
And they're all waiting for *your* photographs. From now until Aug. 11, you can get an entry into the World's Largest Photo Album by having your pictures printed at Kodak Express Stores nationwide. Doing so will also give you a chance to win prizes from Kodak.

Camwhores unite, then. Show the world what you've got!

PINOY rock royalties Mojofly.

KODAK Business Development Manager, Angie Francisco, Kodak Channel Marketing Manager Timmy Jayme and boxer/host Juddha Paolo

SUPERMODEL Phoemela Baranda posting her photo



Surprises of the Century

SOMETHING FUNNY happened on the way to the Superbods forum. Crowd favorites were shunned, contestants who gave either "funny" or "tearful" answers got the nod, and humility and "playing safe" became the name of the game, at least for the Century Superbods contestants.

When one candidate was asked by a judge on who he would vote off the competition, he said his own name. Full Filipina model **Patty Ortega**, one of the crowd's early favorites, announced during the question and answer portion that she really was hesistant in joining the Superbods search, and that her manager just "forced her to join." Despite that, she bagged the title and took home half a million pesos worth of cash and a Century Tuna endorsement.

The male winner, chinky-eyed and fresh faced **Ram Sagad** is a San Sebastian student and basketball player.

During the Q and As, one candidate cried unabashedly announcing to all and sundry that her childhood dream was to be a model, and that

Tim Yap

her being dark has sometimes hindered her. "Don't worry, I'll make you a model," judge **Robby Carmona** assured her.

Big Brother candidates

The above-mentioned candidate was **Dorothy Aragye**, who insisted on speaking in Filipino, as she claimed not to be fluent in English. The audience roared in applause. Plus points for honesty. And then she cried and cried. I think she should join Pinoy Big Brother's next season—she'll most likely win, too. In this particular competition, she garnered second runner-up status.

The audience expressed great disbelief when male supermodel **Joe Vince Canizares** didn't even make it to the finals. "He must have turned off some of the judges," one judge confessed. Still, I reckon that the candidates must be judged fairly on the basis of their performance and physicality—everything else, personal or what not, is not part of it.

Everyone was expecting him to bag the title, but that's the way the cookie crumbles, or in this case, the tuna flakes.

The male side of the crowd all had a crush on candidate number three **Jamie Diago**, who won the texter's choice award. From **Marc Nelson** to **Rovilson Fernandez** to **Brad Turvey** and everyone who reads Maxim were all salivating over this fresh-faced beauty, even me. "There's no straight male judge in the panel, so how can they decide on that?!" screamed ABS-CBN publishing head **Ernie Lopez** after the final six ladies were called onstage.

Superbods and Superfly

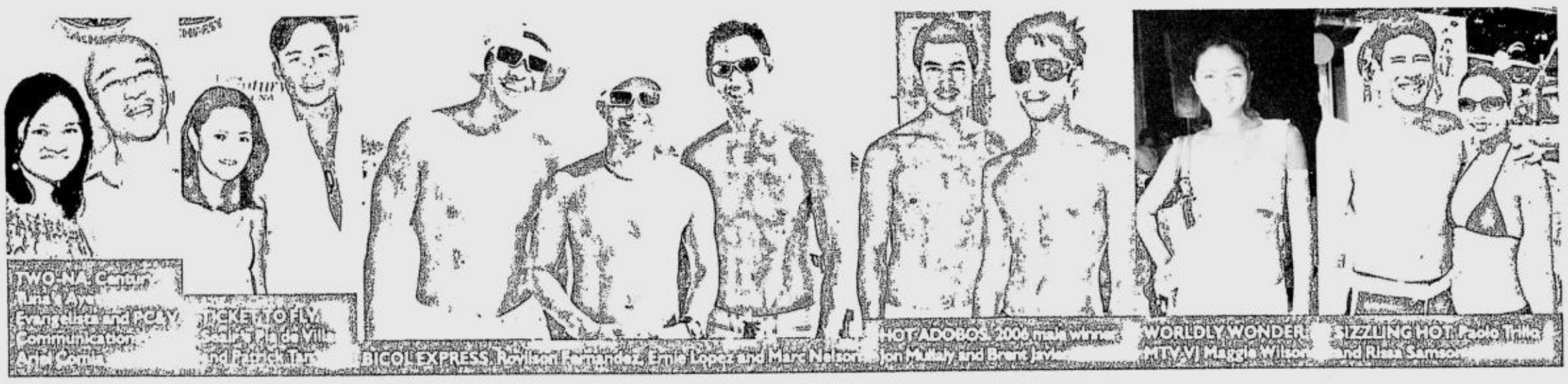
But hey, this is pageant life in the Philippines, where everything is taken seriously. Everything is personal.

And why not, when this Century Tuna Image Model search is the one that gives the biggest pot money at a time when any random Brazilian model can snatch a job for one-tenth of the price. At half a million pesos plus all the Century Tuna you can eat, the prize money beats any Mr. or Miss Whatever crown.

I overheard **Mario Dumaual** of ABS-CBN as he quickly interviewed **Nanette Medved-Po** about her opinion on the winners. "Let's just say that we're happy with the winners." Over dinner with Century Tuna's **Leo Po** and fiancee **Mariel Santos** (they just got engaged!), they, too, agreed with most of the judges choices, but were surprised by some of their calls. "But the panel is a very respected one, so we'll leave it at that."

Now only on its second year, the search has overtaken every body and personality search with its massive tri-media campaign. It is a glorified, staged VTR casting in the beach in front of equally naked and gorgeous folk sizing you up from head to foot and back. The two-day beach fest consisted of celebrity games which featured a new ways of enjoying the tuna of the century, with their new hot and spicy variant, which has 50% less fat and less salt. Yay!

After the Superbods pageant, Superfly resident DJ **Karl Ty** pumped up the night even more. There were over 50 million other events happening all over the island that night, but I just opted to stay at Pier One to jam with my favorite Super! and Superfly peeps as we looked forward to next year's search.



Add Pepper to your life

ANY BARFLY COULD ATTEST TO THE popularity of the party scene's favorite spice boy, Pepper Teehankee.

Always surrounded by his close friends and the scene's hottest expatriate crowd, Pepper lights up a bar upon entry as he starts saying his hi's and hello's and begins introducing his newfound expat friend to us locals.

What people do not know about this society columnist is that he is a master at trivia, a champion cartwheeler (and he can do a head stand on demand!) and was once a top stock broker. Now he has traded his stocks into stock knowledge and party wisdom. He is always seen at Nuvo, and all the other hot spots in town. In fact, it was at Louie Y's flagship bar where Pepper chose to turn one year spicier, and all his pepper-ed friends turned up to make his birthday season hotter than hot. Drinks overflowed, chitter chatter was nonstop.

Happy, happy Peppy!

Tim Yap

Malinis, please!

It's your right to demand honest election

By Pepe Diokno

ROCKED PHILIPPINES INVITES US ALL TO COME TOgether to demand honest elections. Those are two words that don't seem to go together in this country, but we'll change that, right?

"MALINIS PLEASE" happens on Thursday, May 10 at the Amoranto Stadium in Quezon City. As all RockEd gatherings are, it's going to be, *um*, rockin'—the place is going to be full of the best in music, poetry, film, and fine arts (dancing will be provided by the audience).

There are two concerts on May 10. The first, which is at 6 p.m., is the Clean Concert, and it features Noel Cabangon, Joey Ayala, Cynthia Alexander, Kamuning Drive, and Paolo Santos.

The Honest Concert, which happens right after, features Radioactive Sago Project, Chicosci, Kjwan, Giniling Festival, Paramita, UpdharmaDown, Makatha, Kapatid, Greyhoundz, JuanPabloDream, Peryodiko,Stonefree, and many more. It will continue through the wee hours of the morning.

Between all those acts, short films and photo-exhibits from leading filmmakers and photographers will be played.

It's a free concert—no tickets will be sold. Instead, you must come with a valid photo ID (a school ID, work ID, driver's license, or passport), and one of the following: a RockEd t-shirt **or** a signed manifesto, which you can download at rockedradio.com.

Let's show 'em that we care—let the Man hear your voice: the May 14 polls **must** be clean and honest.

Come in white, come in peace, *malinis* please. May 10 at the Amoranto.

For more information, visit http://rockedradio.com or e-mail info@rockedphilippines.org

RockEd the vote

MAKE a stand

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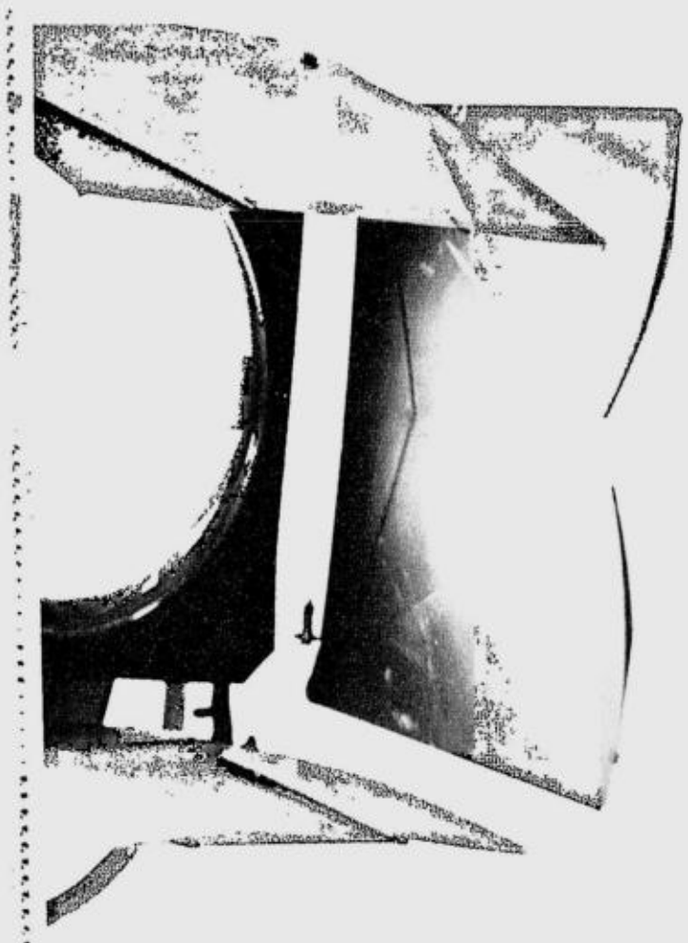

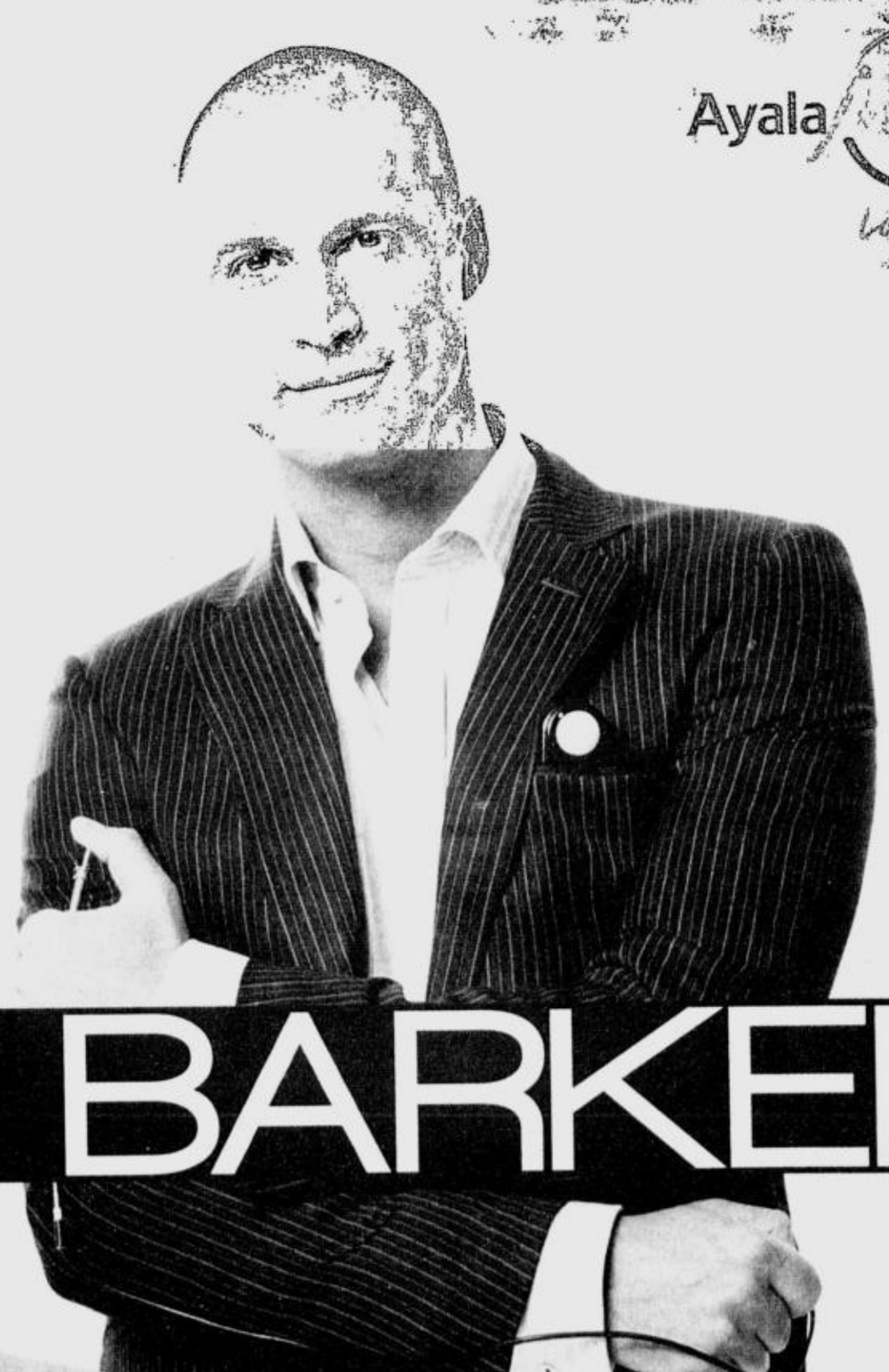

Ayala

We 'em

A ONE-SHOT ENCOUNTER WITH

NIGEL BARKER

Get inspiring tips on fashion photography from Nigel Barker, celebrity photographer and judge of America's Next Top Model as he hits Ayala Malls this May.

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SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Supplement

culture • entertainment • recreation

PHOTO BY STEVE TIRONA

PINOY POSITIVITY. Sinosikat? is at the heart of the emerging Pinoy Soul Movement

Quiet is the new loud

Optimistic, incandescent, and boxfresh, Pinoy soul music is steadily moving from below the surface to top of the shelf

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

As THE decibel level of local indie rock wanes and finally settles at an ear-friendlier spot, the volume of an adjacent movement rises accordingly. It does so politely, with no galloping fanfare or big whoopdee-doo. After all,

QUIET/ D2

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Nestea does it on the beach again this summer with heated games, scorching personalities, and a warm heart for the coastline. Now that's hot!

COURT OF APPEALS. Bubbles Paraiso

Love. Thy. Beach!

ON THE THIRD DAY, GOD CREATED the land and the waters. Then on the fourth day, he threw in the sun and the moon. Truly, a lot can happen in four days, like the creation of a beach, for example. This summer, Nestea shows us that it can do a lot for the beach in four days too.

Nestea Beach 2007 was a full four days of heated games, scorching athletes and celebs, plus sizzling parties in "D'Bora," or what has become the country's favorite summer capital. Yet what sets this 11th year apart from the last decade is a feel-good advocacy that shouldn't be limited to the summer season, and that is taking care of the beach. Yep, Nestea had beach cleanups every morning to help keep Boracay maintain its paradise status. Now that's hot! It's about time someone started environmental campaigns like this, especially if we want to keep coming back to our favorite island.

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

Court appeal

The annual volleyball tournament, which has become a veritable summer tradition in Boracay, attracted droves of sun worshipers and beach volley fans. There were a total of 48 teams from 34 colleges and universities all around the country that competed in the eliminations at La Salle Green Hills, whittled down to 18 teams that made it to the semis and final rounds in Bora. In the end, it was the team of Gabshar Tahiluddin and Yusop Abdulkarim of Mindanao State University Tawi-Tawi who bagged the the men's title, and Janez Armie Igot and Jusabelle Brillo of University of the Visayas taking the women's crown, as well as collecting a cool cash prize of P150,000.

Celebrity volleyball matches entertained the crowd in between games, featuring well-oiled femme-bots, zoolanders, media mavens and TV personalities, who braved the scorching midday sun prove that they could spike not only their drinks. Outs were Geoff Rodriguez and T teamed up with Nestlé's A Publicis Manila's Mondo Ar ing Sam "Spike Goddess" Oh columnists JR Isaac and Phil clinch the Nestea Beach 2007 title.

On a side note—I also (ah fun and channeled my inner and teamed up with Lucky M Chamco and Iya Villania fo tion! All went well for like, 5 until reality shook me to the 1) I am no Gabrielle Reece a der the sun can cause tem and 3) I should really quit em

News flash: Clean celeb

Nestea did a truly refreshi barking on a beach clean-up racay's stations 1 and 2..The l vey, Nancy Castiglione and S themselves among the "sc beach clean-up crew, compo land residents, resort own who enthusiastically picked the coastline. Bravo! Now good green karma! Of cours help if trash wasn't dumped

Quiet is the new loud

From page D1

that seems to be the hallmark of emergent Pinoy soul music—slow-burning and sophisticated, gently espoused but speaker-melting.

This evolving genre's top-shelfness is imminent, with acts such as Sound, Kala, Chillitees, Julianne, Nyko Maca, and Updharma Down already warming our soundscape with oceans of hand percussion, jazzy horn solos, and genuine emotion. Against an angst-filled background-pushed to saturation by today's ruling class of rakistas—the soul scene has become a boxfresh refuge of sorts. Some even dare to call it the new underground.

Switching signatures

Clearly, one of the acts leading this soul patrol is Sinosikat? The cleverly named collective—Kat Agarrado on vocals, Reli De Vera on drums, Nikki Cabardo on keyboards, and Nick Azarcon on guitars—is blowing minds with their indelibly narcotic sound. Their first single, last year's "Turning My Safety Off," was both down-to-earth and otherworldly, a smoldering slice of jazz, soul, rock, electronica, and pure sincerity. How do they pull it off?

"Soul music is one of the things we all have in common," Kat points out. "Although, respectively, we each have our own influences, we try and mesh them all together while keeping in mind our common affection for soul music. It's more like the music chose us, not the other way around. It's something that obviously bound us."

Inspired by everyone from Lani Misalucha and Ugoy-ugoy to the Hotdogs and the Juan de la Cruz Band, Kat, true to her name, lends a feline quality to their overall sound with her spacey/sexy torch singing. "When I was younger, I had a voice teacher and we did vocalizations. When I started joining singing contests, I had a vocal coach to guide me on proper breathing techniques," she continues. "But I benefited the most from singing in a show band, Passage."

Potent and pioneering

The petite frontwoman is extremely proud that Sinosikat? is motivated, determined, and unafraid to go against conventional musical tastes. Since their birth in September 2004, they have taken the lasting legacy of soul and lovingly reinterpreted it one gig at a time. The hard work has paid off in the form of a growing number of groupies and a self-titled debut album under a major label, Warner Music Philippines.

Meanwhile, Kat is also convinced that you don't necessarily have to be, like, Nina Simone or Curtis Mayfield to have soul. "No, I think we Filipinos are very soulful," she clarifies. "We are naturally passionate and emotional. We're unafraid to express or show our deepest feelings. It's very obvious. We just have to recognize and embrace it."

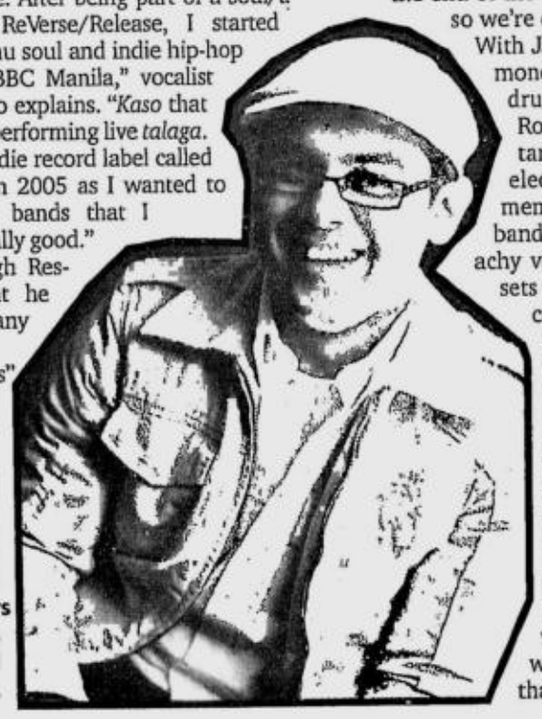
ROMANSA ESPESYAL. Mike's Apartment performing at "Myx Bandarito"

R-E-S-P-E-T-O

Another band classing up the local music industry is funk/soul outfit Mike's Apartment. Named after a not-safe-for-work website, these modern-day urban love prophets have been around for less than a year but are looking to finesse things out from here on forth.

"I've always been into R&B, hip-hop, and soul since college. After being part of a soul/a capella group, ReVerse/Release, I started DJing the funk, nu soul and indie hip-hop that I dug for BBC Manila," vocalist Mike Constantino explains. "*Kaso* that wasn't as fun as performing live *talaga*. So I put up an indie record label called Respeto Music in 2005 as I wanted to help out some bands that I thought were really good."

It was through Respeto Music that he put up a company called "FunkSoulOthers" to bang down the door and push the Manila soul movement forward. More notably, it was via the label that he got to jam with like-minded sound pimpers. "I've always been writing songs. I just didn't have the avenue *para ilabas*. Now I had a band to interpret my music," he says.



RIGHT ABOUT NOW. Mike Constantino set up funk, soul, and jazz collective FunkSoulOthers to push the Manila soul scene forward.

Romansa espesya!

The back-and-forth musical conversation resulted in an unexpected sound. "*Medyo* sexy na soul with that rock edge," Mike fesses. "At the end of the day, it's still soul music so we're quite happy with that." With JJ Amante on the Hammond B3, Jobit Arguelles on drums, Kennard King and Robby Mananquil on guitars, and Brian Sergio on electric bass, Mike's Apartment layers laidback rubber band rhythms with cool achy vocals. It's a sound that sets the mood for a little cocktail-sipping or even some baby-making, as they've apparently been told.

Going the soul route is definitely more challenging than doing indie rock and the ride has its share of bumps. "Since people who aren't familiar with real soul music think that we're a pop/R&B band, we often get flak at gigs that our music is 'soft,' especially when we're at a gig with really rockin' bands," he admits. "The best we can do is just keep doing what we do so that slowly but surely, people will get what we're trying to bring out there."

Likewise, Mike Constantino and the other dudes have always been optimistic about the Pinoy soul connection. "Pretty much all Pinoys can carry a tune and our musicians are so underrated yet extremely talented. Needless to say, they have that fire, that soul inside them. It just so happens that some can dig deeper into to find that center, that place where the soul is, and bring it out via music or whatnot." With such an outlook, the future of this below-the-surface scene looks upbeat and totally sunshiney.

The new Pinoy soul patrol

Sinosikat? is on the crest of a wave, called the Pinoy Soul Movement, that's been building for some time now. "The family is getting bigger and bigger and it's becoming a movement of love, friendship and music. We hope that people would open their hearts & minds for soul music, to give it a try," according to Kat Agarrado. "We hope that people would support local acts and bands that are unafraid to promote original sound by buying original CDs. We hope it'll just keep getting better, inspiring the next generation."

Similarly, FunkSoulOthers has been around for about two years and it's only now that people are starting to get into it. "It's poised for success this year," asserts Mike about Pinoy soul. "It's cool how we're all chipping in to make the scene as vibrant as it should be. Sinosikat? is a perfect example of all the hardships that bands like us have to go through just to be heard. Hopefully, by the time our album comes out in a few months, people will get what soul is and appreciate it for what it is and not try to pigeonhole it into some genre that's already well-known in the Philippines."

Aristotle once said that the soul is characterized by self-nutrition, sensation, thinking and movement. Don't look now, but I think he may have just described an up-and-coming group of Pinoy musicians.

For gig scheds, check out myspace.com/sinosikat1 or yahoogroups-sinosikat Sinosikat? the album is now available.

Watch out for Mike's Apartment's new video, "Nagdedeliryo," on MYX this Sunday, May 6. Stop by for their video launch at Cleopatra KTV, 2102 Roxas Blvd. Show starts at 9 p.m. Guest performances by Chillitees, Drip, Monique w/ Metagroove, and Sound. Tickets go for P150 and come with 2 free beers! Check myspace.com/maptmusic and e-mail mikesapartmentmusic@yahoogroups.com.

Style

Helena Belmo

What is your definitio

Personal style is what how you represent your and accessories and making it your own. It's what sets you apart from everyone else.

What is your personal style?

I'm very preppy and feminine. I go for dresses and collared shirts with cardigans or sweaters. I could probably share clothes with my grandmother but I'll spice it all up with a short skirt or four-inch heels to keep it modern.

How would you spruce up a plain outfit?

With a smile! I'm cheesy, aren't I? A designer bag and a cute ne

Whose fashion sens to?

I admire Kate Moss looks great in what sh together. I love her. Esp with what she's doing f Shop. I'm really lookin ward to her collection f Shop!

What is your favorite ion accessory?

I'll have to go with de bags. I can't live .w them. I love Louis Vuitto

If you were to con with a stylish trend, would it be?

I love the sixties, all and bold. I'd put the P prints on T-shirts!

Mika Lagdamee

What is your definiti personal style?

Personal style is one pression of personal tast

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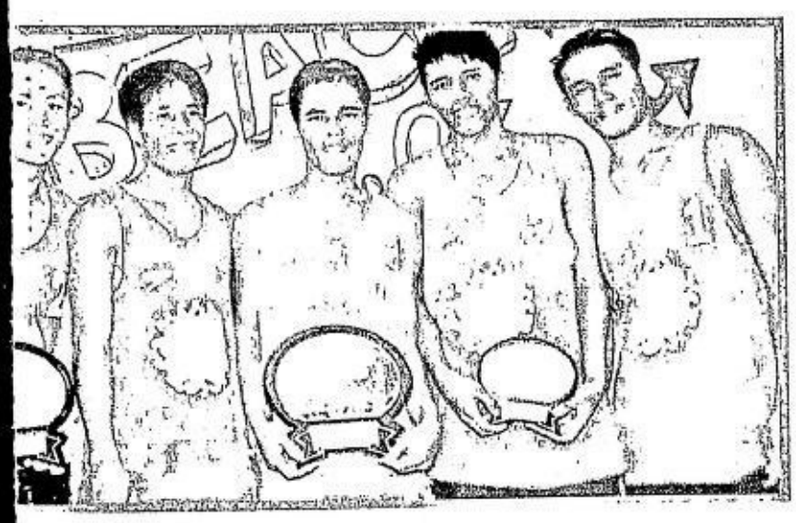

VOLLEY VICTORS. FEU's Joshua Alcarde and Jeremy Floyd Pedregosa, MSU's Yusop Abdulkarim and Gabshar Tahiluddin and FU's Arnel Madeo and Rolando Agus

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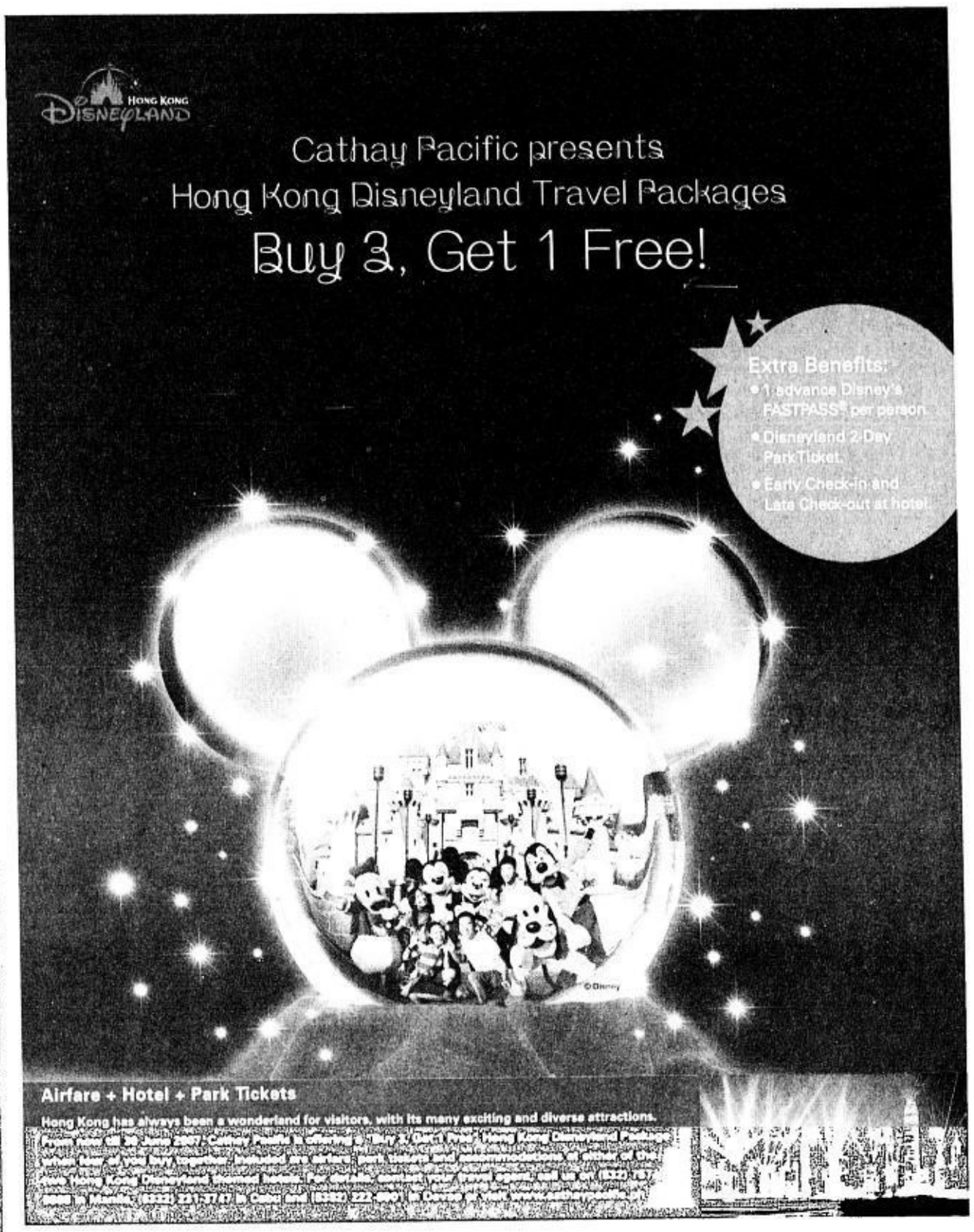
place, right? Hmm.

After cleaning up all that trash, what better way to celebrate than by, well, getting trashed? Well, partying is the official sport of Boracay. A series of cool parties and fashion shows fueled up the weekend nights. A fashion show at the Boracay Mandarin Island Hotel featured the beachside creations of Boracay-based designer PJ Arañador. "Brazilian Night" followed at Summer Place, where Kadangyan performed their ethno music, followed by spicy Latin band Tropikasya. The volley champs toasted to wins at the victory party at Crystal Sands, where crowd favorite Parokya ni Edgar rocked the beach with their music and Chito Miranda's crazy antics.

Truly, a lot can happen in four days. If the beach was created in four days, then Nestea reinvented it as well in a little over a weekend with its refreshing, vibrant, and hip lifestyle philosophy. Now this is your commandment, do as they do and love the beach!

SCUBASUREROS. Dennis Austriaco of Nestlé, Raine Romero of Mindworks and Brad Turvey



sisters

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[illegible] Belmont and Mikee Cojuangco share [illegible]

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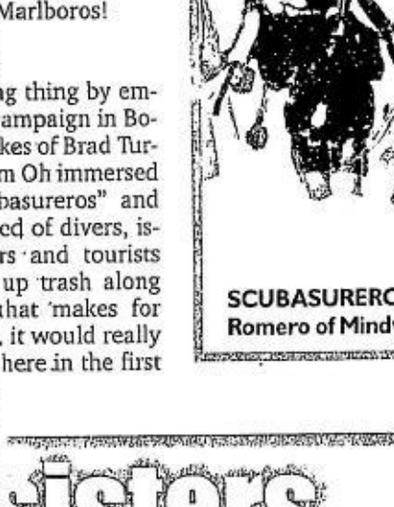

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What is your personal style?

My personal style can be narrowed down to spunky, beach inspired, classic all together.

How would you spruce up a plain outfit?

A good designer bag always does the trick, for any outfit.

Whose fashion sense do you look up to?

I definitely admire Sienna Miller. She never goes wrong. From her casual to evening wear, she always looks stunning.

What is your favorite fashion accessory?

My favorite fashion accessory would be a bag. But then I can never leave home without my watch and rings.

If you were to come up with a stylish trend, what would it be?

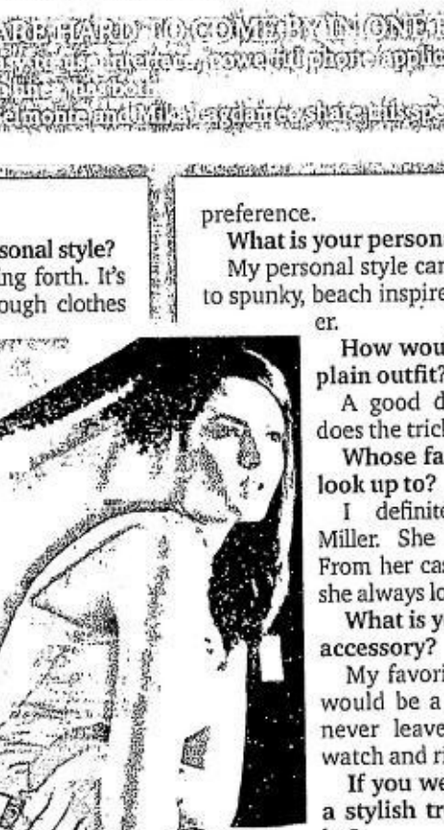
If I cud start a stylish trend, I would take all my scrap cloth and cut, braid or style into into different headbands and even a sarong.

Show off your style and win a Nokia 6300!

We've been chronicling style for years now. This time, we want to know about your own Super style. Tell us about yourself and send us photos of your personal style—be as creative as you want. Send your photos to nokiasuperstyle@yahoo.com in JPG format along with your name, age, contact info. Don't forget the captions!

Nokia and Super will be giving away two sexy Nokia 6300 phones to two lucky and Super stylish Super readers.

Winning entries will be published in Super!



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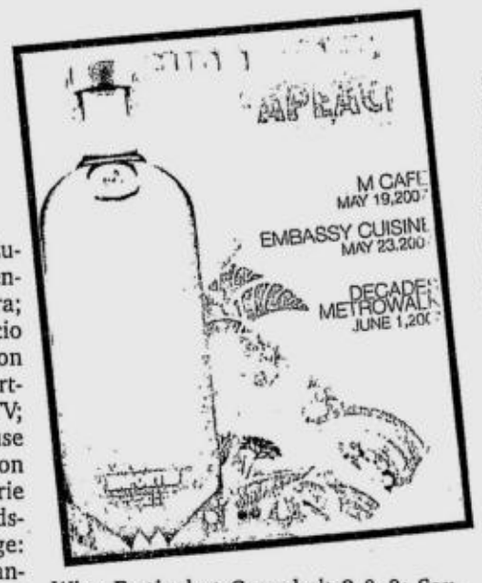
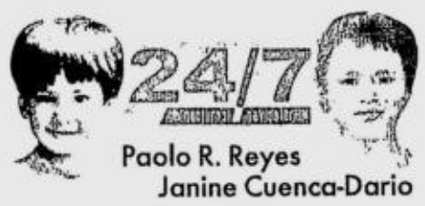
Tropical sensation



IT'S NOT HIS BEST WORK BY ANY standard, but in between "Top Gun" and "Rain Man," a 25-year-old Tom Cruise had one spare summer in 1987 to do "Cocktail"—the syrupy story of a Manhattan bartender who flies to Jamaica, learns to mix drinks with flair, and falls in love.

Aside from increasing the sales of Singapore Slings and boasting a catchy soundtrack (remember the radio-friendly hit, "Kokomo," by the Beach Boys?), the film did have another redeeming factor. It made moviegoers flirt with the idea of jetting off to Jamaica, where the sultry bar scene promised to be an intoxicating concoction in itself.

This May, Absolut Vodka takes you straight to the throbbing heart of the Caribbean through the "Surrender to Apeach Party Series." So pack your passports and head to M Café on May 19, Embassy Cuisine on May 23, and Decades Metrowalk on June 1. From 9 p.m. onwards, witness each venue transform into a tropical playground flowing with sunset colors, sun-dipped tracks by Steak Productions, and the succulent flavors of their new peach-flavored vodka. Call 667-3333 or visit www.absolut.com.



Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

More Super! 24/7 events:

May 5, Saturday

Stolichnaya's Cold War feat. DJ Philippe Ortega & champion bartender Sebastien Bonnefoi at Nuvo; Fiesta Europa's Food & Wine Festival at Greenbelt 2 & 3; MPO Quartet at Serendra; Autobahn Car Club Events at Bonifacio High Street; I-ON Summer Invasion Beach Party at Boracay; Mike's Apartment Video Launch at Cleopatra KTV; Sitti at Casino Filipino Tagaytay; House of Soul w/ DJs Benjo Marquez & Jason Soong at Nuvo; DJs Karl Ty & Marie Garcia at Fiamma; Siesta w/ Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Rouge: Lounge in Color at M Café ; Karen Manion & Blu Room at Martinis Bar; Sexy Saturdays at Absinth; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; House Music at Mezze; DJ Scratchmark at Prince of Jaipur; Arriba at Café Havana Malate

May 6, Sunday

World Press Photo 2007 exhibit at The Podium; Fiesta Europa's Food & Wine Festival at Greenbelt 2 & 3; Saxophoro at Serendra; Autobahn Motorshow w/ cycling race at Bonifacio High Street; Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Greenbelt; Brunch Affair w/ Concertino at Azzurro Linden Suites; Jazz Sunday Brunch at M Café

May 7, Monday

Fiesta Europa's Food & Wine Festival at Greenbelt Opening w/ Jewelmer Jazz Band at Greenbelt 2 & 3; Euro-Tourism Exhibit at Serendra; Happy Mondays hosted by Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati; Chemical Underground at Absinth; Retro Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites

May 8, Tuesday

HeadTurner feat. Nyko Maca + Playground & Caliph8 at M Café; Under the Influence Electronica feat. Drip & guest DJs, Fiamma; Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; 80s & 90s Night w/ DJ Jeff at Temple; Jazz Night at Mezze; Sparkle w/ DJ Patch at Absinth; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Open Mic Night at Club O; Piano Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites

May 9, Wednesday

House of Soul w/ DJs Benjo Marquez & Jason Soong at Fez, Serendra; Rock Series II w/ Shamrock at Metrobar QC; W Wednesdays w/ DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Lush: Smooth Rn'B at Fiamma; Keep on Dancing w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Mezze ; DJ Marie Garcia at Rock Candy (formerly Citrus); DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Mishmash w/ DJ Brando Umali at Absinth; Dejavu 90s Night w/ DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; Live Rock Bands at Temple; Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gweilos Makati; DJs Kimozave & Chrismyx at Prince of Jaipur; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt

May 10, Thursday

Trio Wanderer at Philamlife Theater; MPO Quartet at Greenbelt 2 & 3; Saxophoro at Serendra; Latin Night w/ Tribo Manila at Mezze; Fluxxe: Whatever Thursdays at Absinth; Soundsgood DJs at Nuvo; SPIT at Mag:net Café; Reggae Mistress at Café Havana Greenbelt; Backtrack Thursdays at Club O; Radio Coquina at Coquina

Open Mic Night at Azzurro Linden Suites; World's Fastest Open Bar at Bed

May 11, Friday

Absolut House w/ DJ Tony Pavia at Mezze; Emilie Simon at Rockwell Tent; BBC's Off The Record w/ DJ Mike Constantino at The Room Upstairs; Chill by the Bay w/ live bands & performers at SM Mall of Asia; PI Jazz at Greenbelt 2 & 3; MPO Quartet at Serendra; Sala Ibiza w/ DJ Karl Ty at Nuvo; Electro Disko at M Café; Decadance w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; House Sessions at Fiamma; DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; Karen Manion & Blu Room at Martinis Bar; MILF: Mom I Love Fridays! at Absinth; DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; Jive Fridays at Temple; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; DJs Scratchmark & Bcal at Prince of Jaipur; Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Malate; Drag-on! Fridays at Bed

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 GIGS and send to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com, mag24_7@yahoo.com, and NocturnalNavigator@gmail.com.

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SATURDAY Special

Editor **Nestor U. Torre** • *Assistant Editor* **Rito P. Asilo**

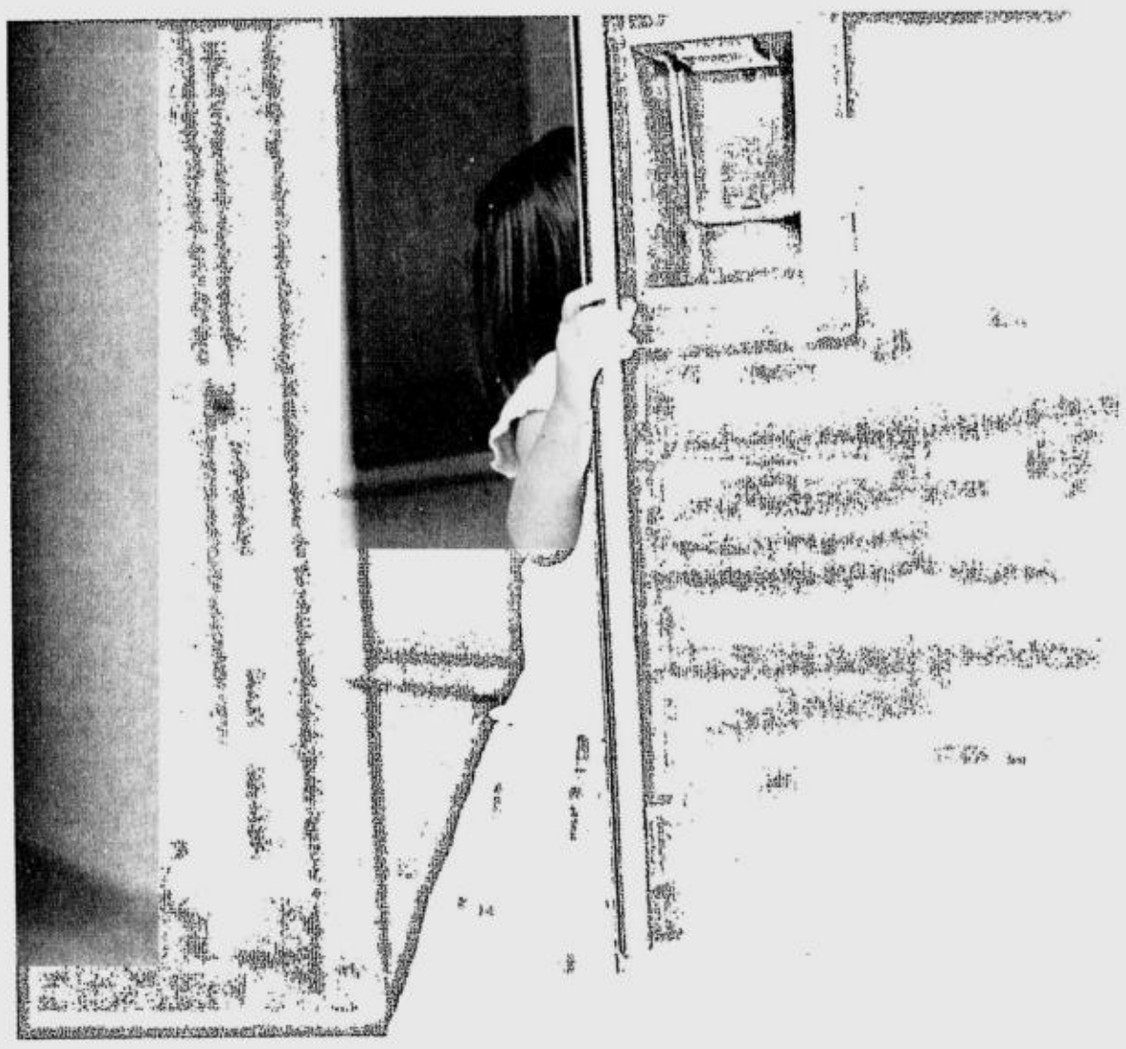
Text us your feedback: Inquirer sat name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) **E-mail:** pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

Lengthy but triumphant spin for *Spidey*

STORY ON PAGE E2

MAGUIRE. Shows the superhero's darker side.

CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO



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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
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4 SPIDER-MAN 3
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5 SPIDER-MAN 3
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6 SPIDER-MAN 3
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7 PAN'S LABYRINTH
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8 indieSine: NUMBALIKDIWA
1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30

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5 FIREHOUSE DOG 12:30 2:50 5:10
SHOOTER 7:30 10:00

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8 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
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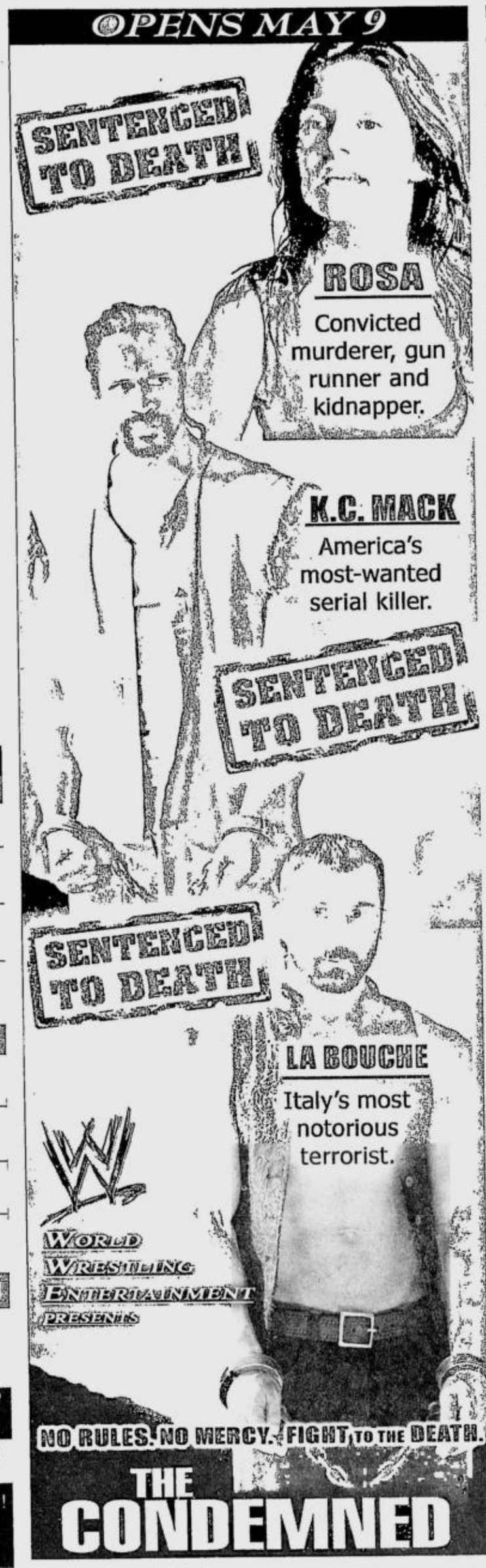
6 PATHFINDER

NOW SHOWING

Lengthy but triumphant spin for Spidey



By Rito P. Asilo

"Spider-Man 3"
D: Sam Raimi
S: Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst, James Franco, Thomas Haden Church

HEARTWARMING AND LIFE-AFFIRMING lessons abound in Sam Raimi's protracted but triumphant third installment in the "Spider-Man" saga:

Just when Peter Parker *aka* Spider-Man (Tobey Maguire) has found the perfect balance between his love for Mary Jane Watson (Kirsten Dunst) and his demanding responsibilities—and growing popularity—as New York's friendly neighborhood web-slinger, his world comes crashing again when the police unravel the identity of his Uncle Ben's real killer, Flint Marko (Thomas Haden Church), who has just escaped prison. After an accident that changes the molecular structure of his body, Marko morphs into Sandman, a new super villain to reckon with—and Spidey's latest nemesis!

But, grief turns into an overwhelming appetite for vengeance when a mysterious black substance from outer space brings out Peter's darker side: He begins to bask in the glow of his alter ego's new-found celebrity, and becomes less sensitive to the emotional needs of Mary Jane, now a struggling albeit less-than-brilliant actress—who's just been fired from her job!

Has success gone to Peter's head? Well, if Harry Osborn (James Franco) has his way, his former best friend is better off without it! He blames Peter for the death of his father! Oh, and by the way, Harry has likewise transformed himself into The New Goblin! With old and new villains looming over his weary shoulders, as well as the arrival of cocky rival photographer, Eddie Brock (Topher Grace), in the Daily Bugle, Peter has his work cut out for him.

After the seamless "Spider-Man 2," Raimi introduces intersecting plotlines that tend to overwhelm and clutter the story's narrative flow. As a result, the production necessitates longer screen time to tie up loose ends. Raimi pulls it off—but barely. With blood-thirsty villains aiming for his hide and spindle, it's no wonder why Spidey has gone a bit cuckoo!

Raimi is served by sensitive actors—Maguire, Dunst, Franco and Church—who subtly but powerfully clarify the intentions of their respective characters. Maguire's Peter Parker is far from the awkward but dashing Clark Kent or the mysteriously brooding Bruce Wayne, so his insecurities are easier for the regular-Joe moviegoer to relate to.

Dunst deftly brings out Mary Jane's pathos, as do Franco and Church, who masterfully transcend the one-dimensional origins of comic-book villainy. In Franco and Church's thespic hands, villains are simple people who just run into rotten luck and bad breaks.

Raimi executes a good number of edge-of-your-seat action sequences and claustrophobic chase scenes that reek of emotional urgency and, yes, venomous rage. But, the director has always been a good storyteller. In "Spider-Man 3," the daunting moral issues that come into play add substance and moral pertinence to Peter Parker's convoluted life.

Raimi's films serve as constant reminders about man's never ceasing struggle to choose between good and evil. As his characters vigorously insist, we are defined by the right and wrong choices we make. But, doing the right thing starts from choosing what is hardest to do: Forgiving yourself.

Brisk election...

From page E4

AQUINO. Guested on "Isang Tanong."

to answer four questions: The first apparently from the general public; the second from a panel of journalists from GMA News, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Newsbreak, and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ); the third from the senatorial candidates themselves; and the fourth was a general question directed to all.

Clarity

The time to answer each question was no more than a minute and a half, which helped keep the show moving at a brisk pace—although, sometimes, at the expense of clarity.

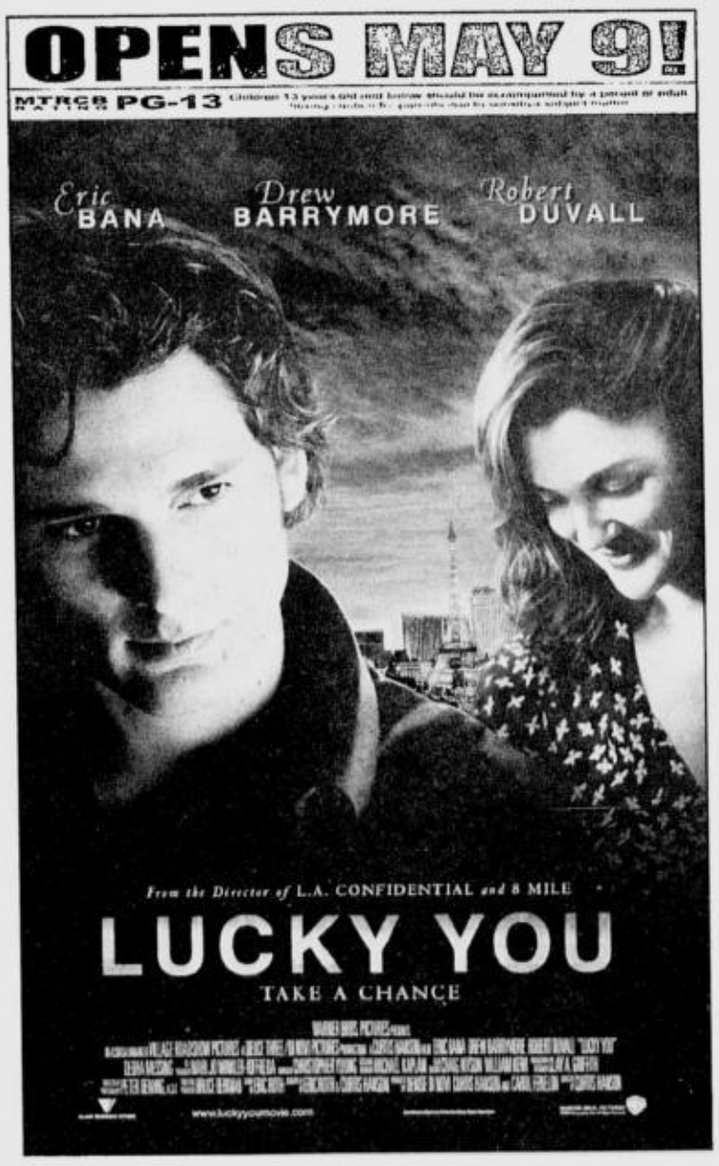
The show's format, obviously geared towards younger viewers, had a game-show feel. While one candidate was in the hot seat, the other candidates who would be answering the same questions would be kept in a soundproof area. Trillanes, who is still being detained, answered the questions from his cell, which—intentionally or not—gave the proceedings more kick.

The time constraint ensured that they had to keep their answers snappy, so at least viewers were spared from too much self-advertising.

Panel of journalists

The best questions came from the panel of journalists, among them Maritess Vitug, Malou Mangahas, and INQUIRER's Conrado de Quiros, whose sharp queries had some candidates briefly at a loss. The other questions were too general, and gave candidates too much room to come up with typical election platitudes.

Of course, the best format for this would be a debate. Though not comprehensive, it nonetheless allows you a glimpse into the minds of the people who will soon be occupying seats in our country's Senate. The show is a step in the right direction towards generating more politically aware voters.



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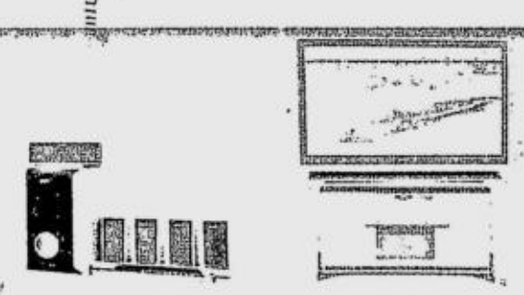

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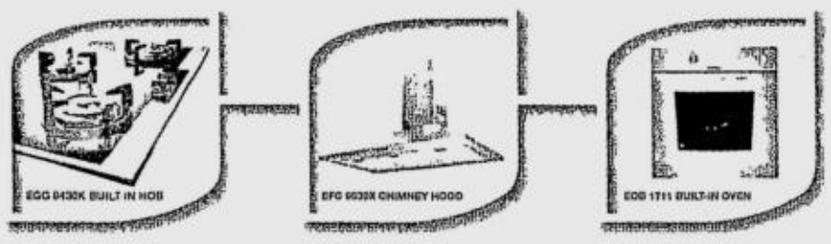

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Brisk election forum provides glimpses into candidates' minds

By Noelani Torre

NOW THAT THE ELECTIONS ARE ONLY nine days away, the senatorial candidates' campaigning efforts have risen to fever pitch. Every time you go out, or pick up a newspaper, or turn on the television or radio, you are inundated with a barrage of grinning politicians' mugs, their ostensibly earnest slogans, and campaign jingles.

Their TV ads pop out every few minutes, and in these, they are depicted as saviors of the country, the father/mother/brother/sister/friend of every Filipino, the champion of the poor—so on and so forth. Vote for us, they urge, we have all the answers!

First session

Do they, really? Your ordinary voter doesn't know for sure, but he/she gets a chance to find out in GMA-7's senatorial forum, "Isang Tanong." The first session, which aired last April 29, featured 13 senatoriables: Genuine Opposition's Antonio Trillanes IV, Francis "Chiz" Escudero, Luis "Chavit" Singson, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng, Sonia Roco, and Alan Peter Cayetano;

Team Unity's Edgardo Angara and Miguel Zubiri; and the not-as-popular Ruben Enciso (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan), Felix Cantal (Philippine Green Republican Party), Dr. Martin Bautista and Adrian Sison (both from Ang Kapatiran).

Each candidate had

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SPIDER-MAN 3 G 11:40,2:40,5:40, 8:40,11:30
FIREHOUSE DOG G 12:10,3:10,9:10
SPIDER-MAN 3 G 1:40,4:40,7:40,10:40
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2 SPIDER-MAN 3 MTRCB GP 2:00, 8:00, 11:00
3 SPIDER-MAN 3 MTRCB GP 10.00am, 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
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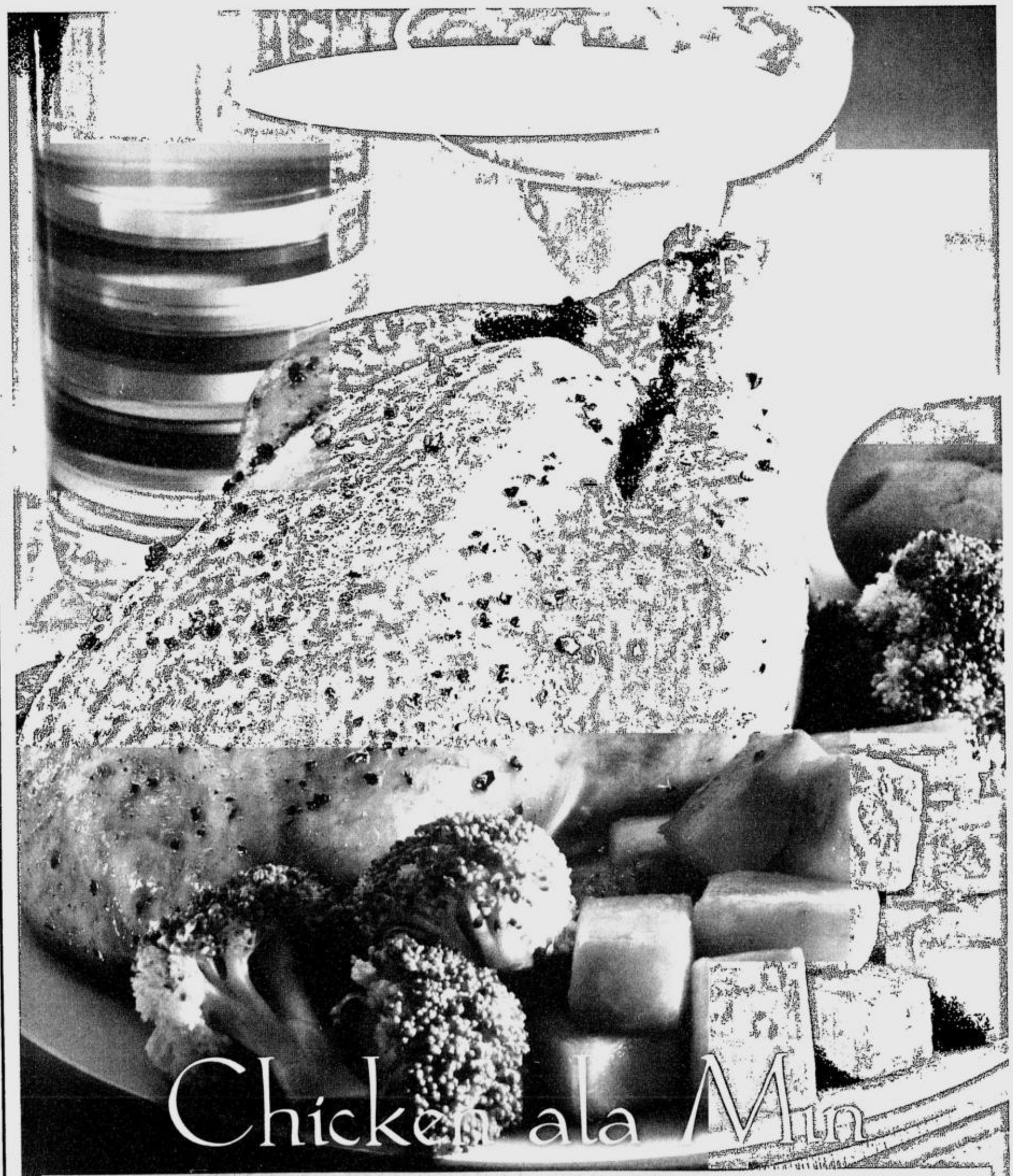

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SATURDAY Special

CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO

Tyra Banks says, 'So what?'

BANKS. Is making an important point about "less than perfect" people no longer following whimsical rules that others have made.

By Nestor U. Torre

FORMER SUPERMODEL TYRA BANKS hosts a popular TV talk show, but she's had a tough time crawling out of Oprah Winfrey's shadow. After all, Oprah has ruled the TV roost for decades, and the fact that both she and Tyra are black makes the younger host even less unique.

At first, Tyra tried to hoe her own TV row by focusing on her high-fashion antecedents, inviting all sorts of gaunt and freaky denizens of the world of *haute couture* to her show. They did sizzle and shock, but they soon turned off the mainstream TV audience.

Unfair comparison

Clearly, that wasn't the expedient way to go, so Tyra overhauled her show and went for causes and exposes. This resulted in some unfair comparisons to Oprah, who'd been there, done that.

After a while, however, Tyra fine-tuned her new focus to zero in on teen and young-adult viewers, and her program finally clicked and zoomed up in the ratings.

Recently, however, Tyra was criticized once more—this time, for gaining "unflattering" pounds and inches! Since she had been a supermodel, some snitty people felt that she should remain gaunt and pluperfect, and they professed to be "shocked" at the former model's now "fat" figure.

Fact was, Tyra weighed only 160 lbs—definitely *not* fat at all. But, it was some 50 pounds more that what whisper-thin supermodels weigh, hence the heavy criticism.

It didn't matter to Tyra's detractors that her high-fashion years were long over. They insisted that it was her *obligation* as a celebrity to look perfect, so she should lose all that extra weight, *pronto*!

Strict instructions

Tyra could have placated them by meekly obeying their strict instructions, but she didn't. She pointed out that she was now a TV host, not a model, so she didn't have to be so gaunt and could now enjoy life more. Besides, 160 lbs was definitely not the end of the world, so—"So what?"

When Tyra first uttered those two words, she didn't realize that they would quickly become a mantra that other "less than perfect" women would intone and embrace.

But, that's *exactly* what happened. If you catch Tyra's show these days, it's full of features on other girls and women who have nixed the harsh dictates of "perfection," and have proudly opted to be their own, "imperfect" selves.

In the process, they are making an important point about people no longer following whimsical rules that others have made. They also oppose the anorexia and bulimia fads that have become such health hazards to young women who are desperately trying to look as lean as some show biz stars.

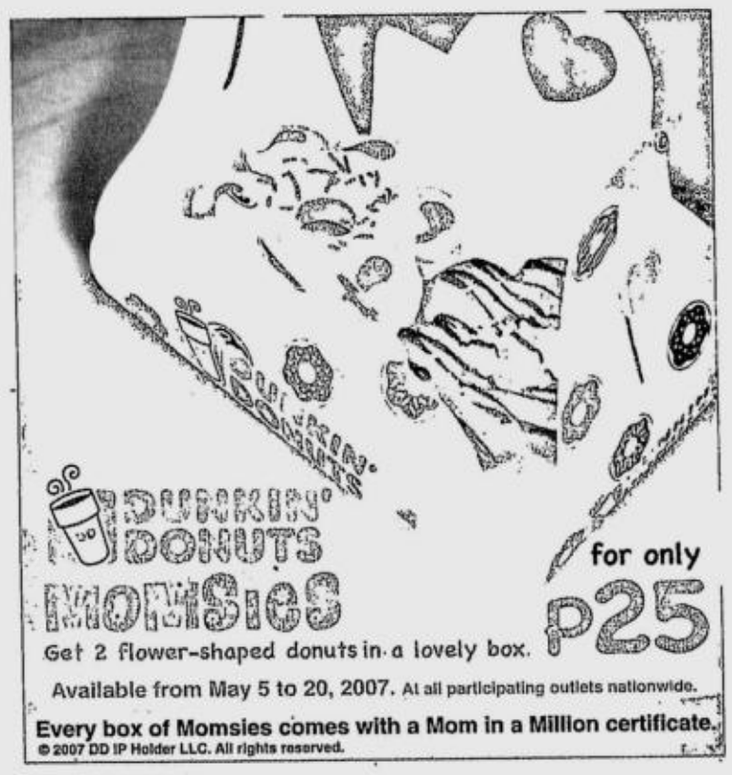
Other aspects

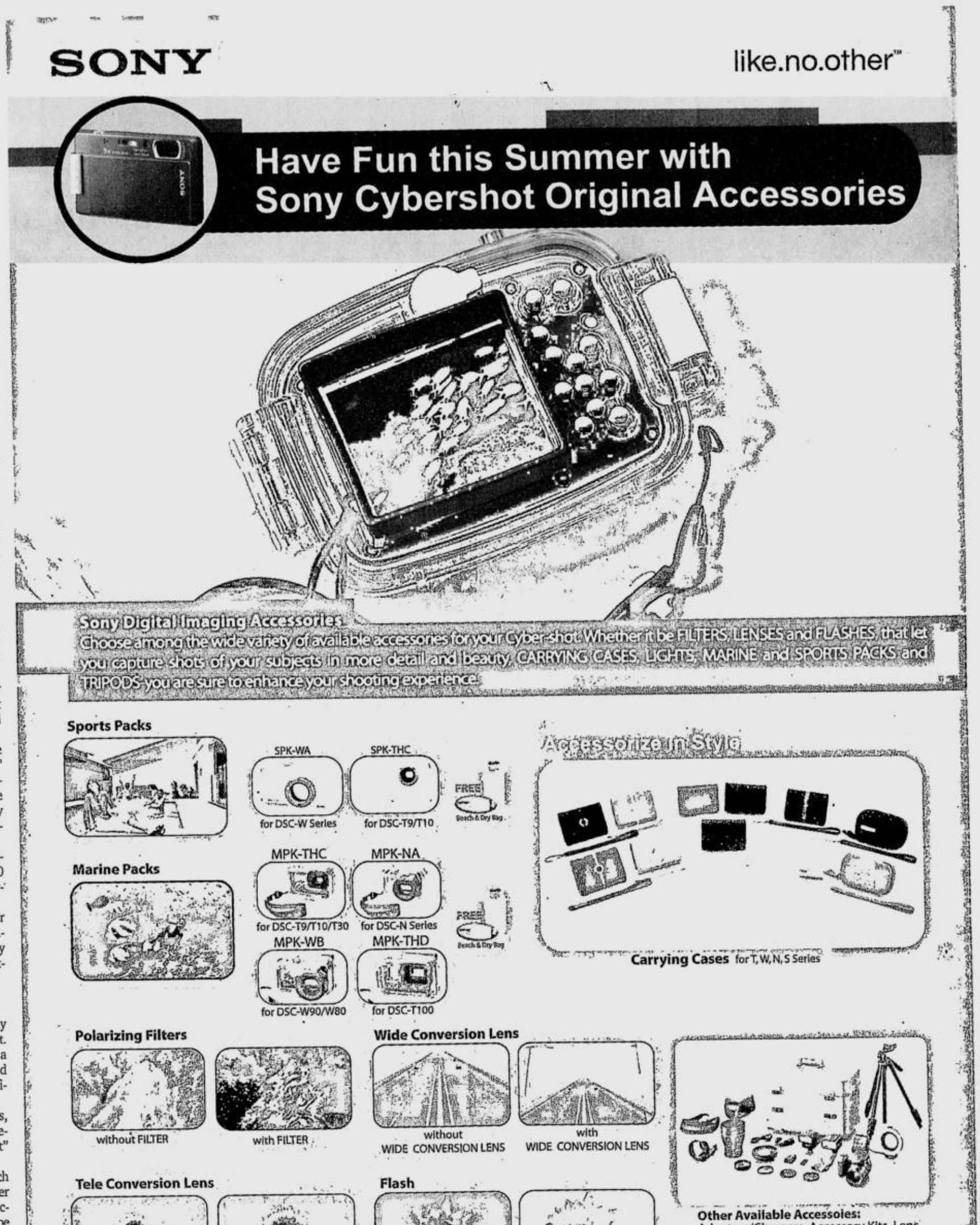
Tyra's spontaneous "So what?" movement has expanded its reach and pertinence to include other aspects of living aside from looks. Increasingly, more people are defying "rules" that prevent them from doing whatever they want to do, just because they don't or can't do it "perfectly."

As long as they don't violate other people's rights in the process, they now "dare" to be themselves, and have a great time in the process!

Of course, this can be taken to extremes. Within reason, however, it's a great and liberating development, and all of the billions of "imperfect" human beings out there should thank Tyra for helping set them free from other people's unfair and irrelevant expectations.

All together now: "I'm not perfect? I fail to measure up to your whimsical standards? —So *what*?!"





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Mother's day at Marco Polo Davao

IT'S A WHOLE WEEKEND CELEBRATION OF Mother's Day at Marco Polo Davao. Treat your mom to her simple joys with these wonderful activities and gifts made especially for her.

Indulge her with an upgraded lunch and dinner buffet at Café Marco or Lotus Court where she'll get exceptional giveaways. Have the whole family join her in a feast of endless delicacies and she even eats for free if you come in a group of five. Immortalize this family event in a frame while our photographer takes your picture as a souvenir from us.

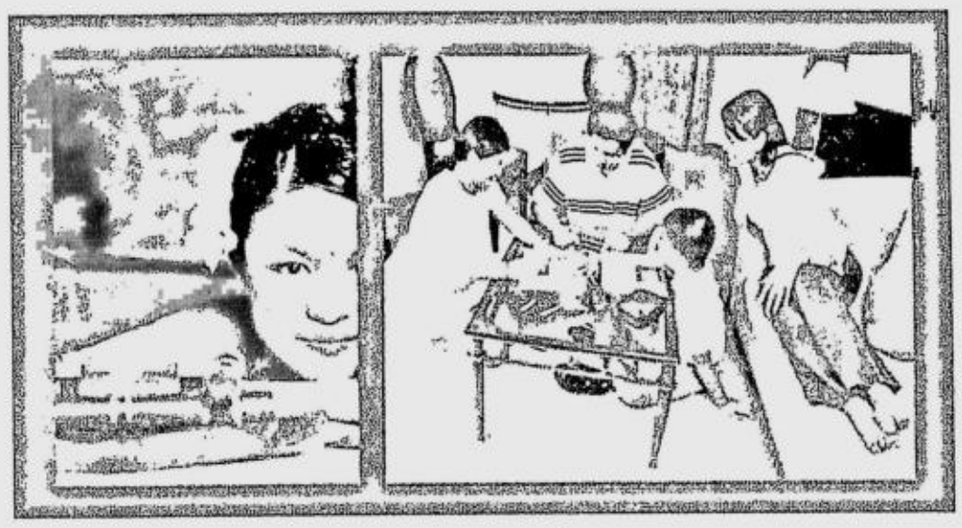
Surprise her with endearing flowers sold at our "Just for Mom" gift cart at the Lobby. Wrap them in beautiful and colorful bouquets, vases or pots, or have them delivered along with cookies, chocolates, wines, and more --- whichever's her favorite.

And just as she loves flowers, she'll surely enjoy our one of a kind Ikebana seminar where she'll even get a chance to win fabulous prizes. This seminar takes place on May 12, from 2 to 5 p.m., for absolutely no charge at all. If cooking is her thing, executive chef Ed Tuazon will give her more than a few tips and recipes in a Cooking Demonstration on May 13, between 10 a.m. until noon, also for free. Capping the whole celebration is a fun Ballroom Dancing at the ballroom from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Moms who availed of the dinner buffet at either Café Marco or Lotus Court get free entrance and can bring along one companion with whom she can dance the night away. Walk-ins will be charged at a minimal amount.

Show your mom how much you love her and make her weekend a memorable one.

For reservations and inquiries, please call 221-0888 local 7222.

Mom's weekend getaway at The Bellevue



IT'S TIME TO TREAT YOUR MOM TO HER most deserved weekend of relaxation and comfort in an Executive, Premiere, or Bellevue suite room at The Bellevue Hotel, where pleasure and pampering is both luxurious and inexpensive. When you avail of The Bellevue Hotel's Mother's Day special room rates from May 11 to 14, you can enjoy a free overnight stay in a deluxe room which you can avail on your next visit. A buffet breakfast for two persons is available if you take the Executive Suite while buffet breakfast for four persons if you avail the Premiere Suite.

Other perks include a complimentary bottle of sparkling wine at Café d'Asie for every group of four dining during lunch or dinner; 20 percent discount on spa service at the The Bellevue Spa and free use of swimming pool and gym facilities at The Bellevue Spa Club; complimentary shuttle service to nearby malls and business districts, waive on minimum consumable charge at 20/20 Bar, unlimited broadband Internet access, welcome fruit plate, two bottles of mineral water replenished daily, and local newspaper.

Starting this month, The Bellevue Spa also offers a premium facial that's more than skin deep, from Aroma Chroma Therapy by Beaubelle Institute. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

The Gandhi gastronomy at the Manila Pavilion

SEASONS SPICES UP YOUR WEEKEND with a tasteful Indian feast Gandhi himself cannot resist. The Hindu Times satiates your appetite for Indian cuisine every Saturday and Sundays of May.

Before you help yourself in this hearty Indian feast, you might want to start-off with any of the three appetite boosters: two kinds of papadom served with mango chutney and spicy mint dip, vegetable samoosa or Panjabi lentil soup. And for the main course, try the lamb leg carving paired with shrimp and fish pacora, yellow daal, basmati or piryani rice. And to top everything off is a sweet serving of mango lassy or Nan bread.

While the grown-ups indulge in an exotic spread, kids can have their own buffet delights in the Kiddie Corner where classic party favorites are served in petite sizes for the both the young and young at heart.

Buffet is priced at P900+++ per person. Lunch starts at 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. while dinner begins at 6:30 to 10:30 p.m.

For inquiries and reservations, call Manila Pavilion Hotel at 526-1212 extension 2318.

Mommys' day out at the Century Park Hotel

THINKING OF A NICE Mother's Day gift that will surely delight while maximizing your little time and money? Bring her and the whole family at the Century Park Hotel, where all mothers will surely experience a day of splendid indulgence, exclusive pampering, and a chance for them to receive special rewards and gifts.

Executive chef Rudy Velasco prepares healthy and filling choices of Chef's Special Creations at Café in the Park, a fitting gift to the loving mothers. All of these are only for P950++ for adults and P550++ for kids.

While at Century Tsukiji, the banner Japanese Restaurant of the Century Park Hotel, will give special appetizer to all mothers who will dine on lunch or dinner.

With a minimum consumption of P1000 net on food and beverage from Café in the Park, Top of the Century, Century Tsukiji, and when you buy a Mother's Day Cake at Deli Snack, you are instantly entitled to a 5 percent discount to any Jewelmer product from the Poutporri shop of the Century Park Hotel upon presentation of your receipt starting May 1-31.

On Mother's Day, Jewelmer will also be raffling off a gift certificate at Century Tsukiji, Café in the Park, and Top of the Century. When you buy a Mother's Day Cake at the Deli Snack, you are also instantly entitled to the raffle draw on May 13. This gift is perfect to all deserving mothers with sophisticated style and elegance.

For inquiries and reservations, please call 528-8888.

Spend moments with mom at the Richmonde Hotel

CREATE ENDEARING MEMORIES FOR MOM as she spends her special day at The Richmonde Hotel in comfort and style. On Mother's Day weekend, give mom a well-deserved treat with an exquisite room package consisting of an overnight stay in a cozy and luxurious deluxe room or junior suite, buffet breakfast for two persons, complimentary use of the Health Club's gym, steam/sauna rooms and heated indoor pool. And just for mom, she can choose either a relaxing massage inside the room or a set of select salon services which include hair cut with shampoo and blowdry, hair spa treatment and a 30-minute back massage from Head Zone Salon located at the hotel's 4th level. This Mother's Day room package is available only from May 11 to 13 at P3,800++ for the deluxe room and P4,200++ for the junior suite.

On May 13, indulge Mom with a celebration in her honor at the Richmonde Grill and feast on a lavish luncheon buffet spread of international fare such as Steamed Prawns, Crabs and Oysters, Sushi, Sashimi, Pan Grilled Salmon Teriyaki, Baked Mussels, Beef Stew a la Osso Busco, Prawn Tempura, Grilled Chicken in Cream Pesto Linguini, Paella a la Valenciana plus Roast Prime Rib, Lamb Shawarma, Pork Lechon at the carving table and many more delectable choices of soups, salads, main dishes, pizza, dimsum and an array of tempting desserts. Avail of the Mother's Day Lunch Buffet for only P950+++ which already includes a round of iced tea or softdrink, a special caricature of mom and a chance to win in the Grill's Mother's Day raffle.

For further inquiries and reservations, please call 638-7777 extensions 3703/3704 (Rooms) and 3409 (Grill) or call Room Reservations direct at 689-8411/689-8412 and Richmonde Grill at 689-8419.

Quantum Hotels & Resorts appoints new managers

RENOWNED PROPERTY MANAGEMENT EXPERTS QUANTUM HOTELS & Resorts announces the recent appointment of two new additions to their power team. Melisse B. Salvano assumed the position of hotel manager for the Malayan Plaza, while Marie Jovie B. Reyes is the new hotel manager for Subic Holiday Villas. Both managers officially came on board last April 2, and will be responsible for the control, direction and supervision of day-to-day operations of their respective hotels. The two managers bring with them a wealth of experience from the hospitality industry. Salvano's professional path led her through sales, marketing and operations with past appointments with J.W. Marriott, the Peninsula Manila, Business Week Magazine and others. Likewise, Reyes also has extensive experience in sales, marketing and operations with the Lighthouse Marina Resort, the Bayview Park Hotel and Insular Century Hotel Davao For the past seven years, Quantum Hotels & Resorts' name has been synonymous with high quality hospitality lodging. In the Philippines, they have been successfully keeping house for properties such as the BSA Tower, BSA Suites and Perla Mansion in Makati and the Malayan Plaza in Ortigas. In partnership with property developers Starland Properties, Quantum Hotels & Resorts also manages the Italian-inspired Subic Holiday Villas. For reservations or more information on Quantum Hotels @ Resorts properties, call (02) 864-0941 to 45, or e-mail: sales@quantumsuites.com; or check out the website at www.quantumsuites.com.

"ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS." The Cinemalaya winner is one of the few digital features that have clicked with mainstream viewers to date.

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Local digital indies, pro and con

By Noelani Torre

DIGITAL FILMS, ONCE A MERE TREND, have come into their own. There have been many discussions regarding digital films and local filmmaking, but most of the inputs have come from industry insiders, not from viewers. What do *they* think? Some opinions:

"I think it's cool that digital films, being the playground of local indie filmmakers, explore topics and movie-making techniques not often utilized in mainstream productions.

Wider recognition

"It's not really a matter of quality, but more a matter of much-deserved wider recognition. Digital films hold their own against commercial movies. In fact, they are sometimes better than what the mainstream industry is offering. But who gets the recognition?

"I don't know how the awards system works here, but I have a feeling that indie films fall under some sort of "special awards" section. I mean, 'Enteng Kabisote' as film of the year? Come on! As it stands, movies like 'EK3' get to be the face of current Philippine cinema, rather than the more deserving ones." —**Hathem Bahjin**, *23, technical support representative*

"Local digital films are entertaining—especially those that are original. But it's best to watch these films in their original, not pirated versions." —**Saturnino Caleze III**, *48, councilor*

"Digital films are getting there, but not yet. Technology is the wave of the future, but *Pinoy* digital cinema is still in its infancy. It needs media attention and promotion. The upside is that it's a welcoming relief from commercial or formulaic studio movies." —**Ian Moscoso**, *34, teacher*

More accessible

"It's a field with huge potential. It makes filmmaking easier, more accessible and affordable. It's a lot less limited in terms of content and scope." —**Raine Pimentel**, *25, student*

"Filipinos are slowly catching up with the trends in digital filmmaking. We are creative and talented, but we need to work out its financial aspects—the budget, or lack of it. It's not time-consuming because less manpower is needed." —**Maria Thirza Ojas**, *29, guidance counselor*

"For one, *hindi siya ganun ka*-costly. *Kahit sino pwedeng sumabak. Kung sinong may* digicam *at konting imahinasyon, pwede nang gumawa ng pelikula. 'Di kailangang puro sikat na artista ang kunin, pwede na ang mga kaibigan mong magaling umarte. Sa* digi films, *mapapansing mas malayang pumili ng istorya ang mga manunulat at direktor. Hindi sila hawak ng malalaking* producer. *Madalas nananaig ang bagong konsepto sa paggawa ng pelikula. Hindi pera and* priority." —MJ Polina, *24, photographer*

"ENTENG KABISOTE 3." Is the 2006 MMFF best picture winner the face of current Philippine cinema?

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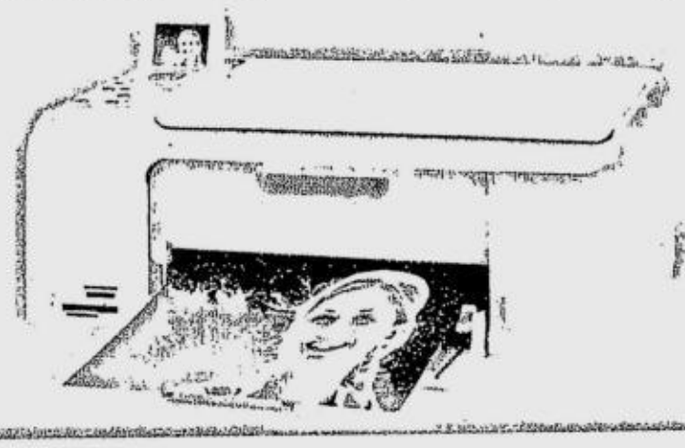

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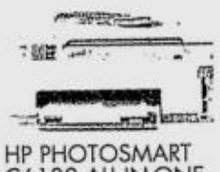

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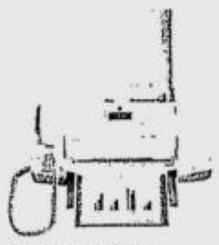

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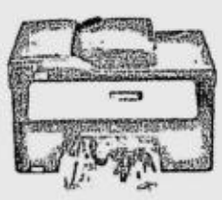

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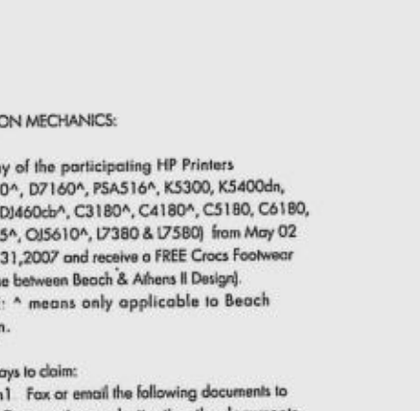
   NOTE: ^ means only applicable to Beach design.
2. Two ways to claim:
   Option1 Fax or email the following documents to Yeaps Corporation and attention the documents to Ms. RC Concepcion.
   a. Sales invoice/Official receipt
   b. Cut out printer serial number sticker
   c. Cut out promotion sticker
   d. Valid ID
   NOTE: A customer representative will contact you on the claiming/ delivery instructions.

   Yeaps Corporation's contact information are as follows: Telephone No.. (02) 7532558; Fax No.: (02) 845-1634; Email Address: hp_synergy@yeaps.com, Office Address: 2306 Herrera Tower, Rufino corner Valero Street, Salcedo Village Makati City.

   Option 2: You may also claim the Crocs Footwear directly at Crocs Store (02) 856-1358 located at Bonifacio High Street Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Just present and submit above documents cited in OPTION 1
3. Redemption of Crocs Footwear is valid until September 30, 2007



Choose from any of the following Free Crocs footwear:

1 800 14 6688
(632) 867 3337
phcontact@hp.com

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hp invent

Per DTI Permit No. 1382, Series of 2007.

SM Advantage continues to provide members with Philam Insurance benefits

The **SM Advantage Loyalty Program** – in partnership with **Philam Insurance** – continues to provide unique insurance benefits to its ever-increasing membership base which to date numbers over 3.2 million.

Coverage

Designed to protect SM Advantage members and their families against the uncertainties and financial difficulties brought about by accidents, the **Comprehensive Personal Accident Insurance** package includes:

- 24-hour Coverage, 365 days a year, worldwide!
- Accidental Death Benefit
- Disability Benefits
- Unprovoked Murder and Assault Coverage
- Accidental Burial Expense Reimbursement
- No Medical Examination Required
- Entry age: 18 to 65 years old, renewable up to age 72.
- Commercial Flying Coverage

Eligibility

Upon accumulation of 70 reward points, an SM Advantage member becomes automatically eligible for a ₱100,000 Philam Personal Accident Insurance Coverage for one year.

- Member must be 18 to 65 years old and have a minimum balance of 70 points.
- Members who were not covered by the Insurance Program last year.
- Members who did not opt out from the Insurance Program last year.

A token payment of 20 points is automatically deducted from the qualified member's points balance.

Mr. Winfred Bartolome (at left, with daughters Justina and Andrea) accepts claim proceeds from Mr. Rey Maclang, Assistant Vice President of Marketing Convergence, Inc. (an affiliate of the SM Group of Companies), and Ms. Josette Pacho, Assistant Vice President of Philam Insurance. This insurance benefit is arranged by SM in partnership with Philam Insurance for eligible SM Advantage members.

Mr. Bartolome's wife was an SM Advantage member who was insured with Philam. As her beneficiary, Mr. Bartolome received the sum of ₱110,000 representing her insurance benefit.

SM Advantage members who are currently not eligible because they have less than 70 points will be included in the program when they reach the required points balance.

Review and consideration of eligibility of members will be done every 15th of each month and effectivity of coverage will commence on the 16th of the same month.

Exclusions

War or war-like operations, military or naval service, willful participation in any crime, self-inflicted injury or attempted suicide, osteoporosis, childbirth, miscarriage, or any pregnancy-related complications, accident or loss while under the influence of alcohol or unprescribed drugs, professional sports.

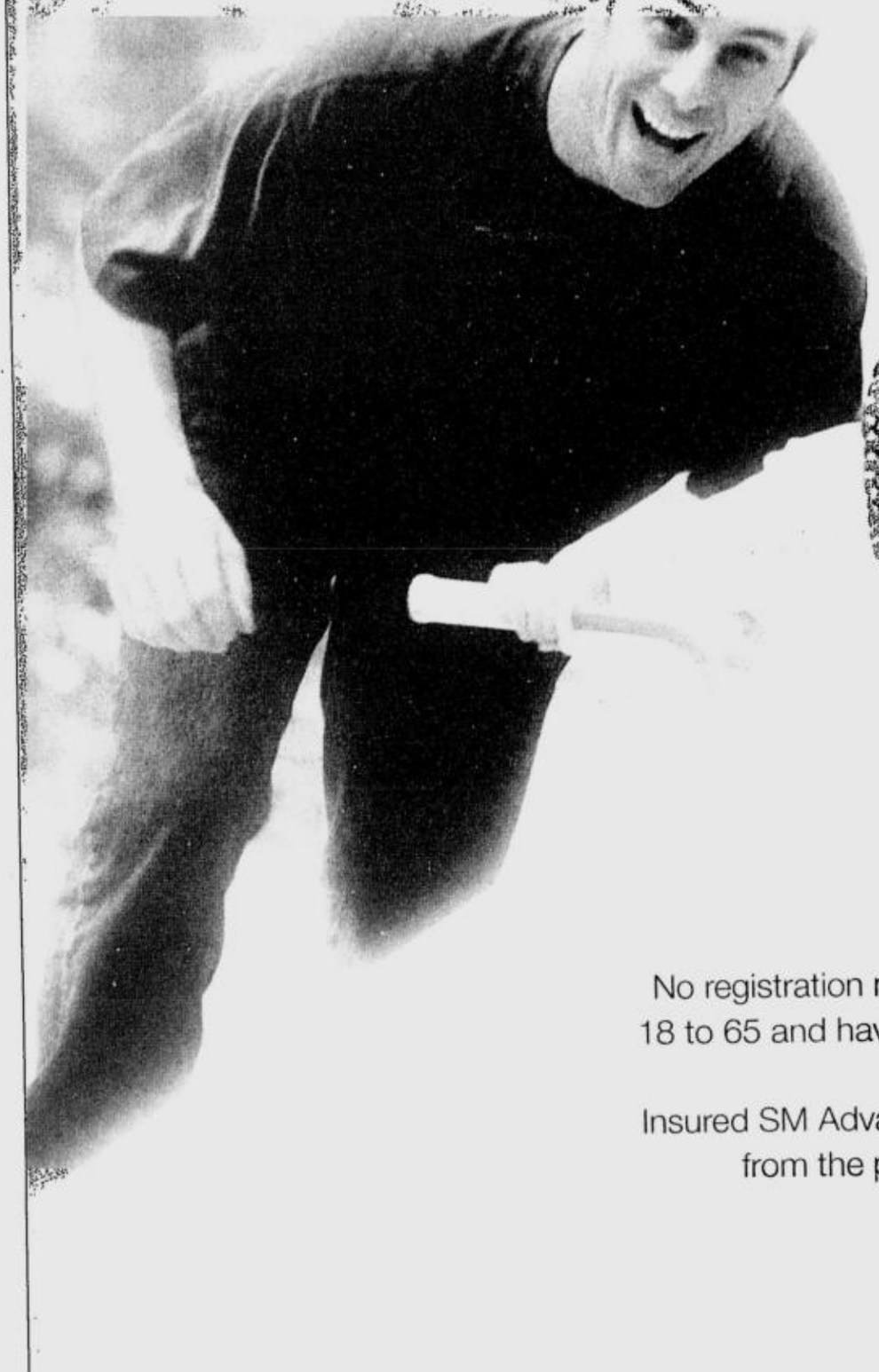
Worldwide Network

Philam Insurance Company, Inc. is a member of Philam Group of Companies, which includes Philamlife and General Insurance, Philam Care, Philam Plans, Philam Bank, Philam Asset Management, Philam Properties and AIG Credit Card. With assets over Php8.9 Billion, Philam Insurance is considered as one of the largest in the industry.

American International Group (AIG) is a worldwide leader in financial services and the largest commercial insurer in the world. AIG has offices in over 130 countries and jurisdictions worldwide. AIG has been in the insurance business for 75 years and has assets worth over US$798 Billion. AIG is a member of the World Travel and Tourism Council. In the Philippines, AIG is represented by the Philam Group of Companies.

Note: This ad contains only a general description of the coverage and is not a statement of contract. All coverages are subject to the exclusions and conditions of the actual policy.

To have protection... Peace of mind... That is a privilege!



For only 20 points SM Advantage members get a P100,000.00 Personal Accident Insurance for one year.

No registration needed. SM Advantage members who are between 18 to 65 and have 70 accumulated points are automatically eligible!

Insured SM Advantage Card Members whose policies have expired from the previous insurance campaign are also automatically qualified for this current program.

Philam Insurance will be more than delighted to hear from you!
Call Philam's Hotline at **(02) 528-5202** for your inquiries.

SM Advantage members who do not wish to avail of the offer may opt out via any of the following methods:

- SMS: Register first by sending SMAC REG <16-digit SMAC #> <4-digit PIN> to 2213
  Text SMAC INSURANCE OUT to 2213 [P2.50/text]
- Fax: Fax the accomplished form to 833-8888 (IVRS-press option 5)
- Customer Service Counter: Fill-out and cut-out the form below and submit to the Customer Service Counter at any SM Department Store Branch.

NO. I do not wish to avail of this privilege.

Date:_____ SM Advantage Membership Card Number:_____

Name:_____ Tel:_____

Address:_____ Signature:_____

You have until June 15 to opt out. If we do not hear from you by then, you will be automatically enrolled in this program and 20 points will be deducted from your SM Advantage Account.

SM ADVANTAGE

PHILAM INSURANCE

AIG® **A Member of American International Group, Inc.**

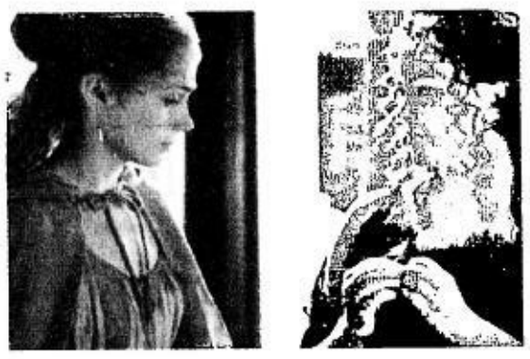
SATURDAY *special*

The glory that was 'Rome' gears up for final season

MCKIDD. His character descends to the very pits of emotional and psychological hell in Season Two.

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER A POPULAR FIRST SEASON, HBO's most expensive series, "Rome," will launch its second and final season at 11 p.m. on Monday, May 7. The period series has had a particularly empathetic effect on viewers because its two protagonists, Lucius Vorenus and Titus Pullo, are "ordinary" characters, so it's easy for similarly "ordinary" viewers to relate to them.



KERRY Condon (left) and Polly Walker play Roman wives on the award-winning HBO series.

Significant action

The clever thing about "Rome" is that the two "just-folks" leads are situated in the periphery of some really dramatic and significant action—nothing less than the political turmoil in Rome surrounding the assassination of Julius Caesar, and the tumultuous events that it unleashed.

Season One presented Vorenus (Kevin McKidd) as the embodiment of the steadfast Roman soldier who did his duty no matter what. A fiercely loyal bodyguard of the late Caesar, Vorenus experiences a major change of character and temperament in the series' second season.

He descends into near-madness over his failure to protect Caesar, his role in his wife's death, and the rumored demise of his missing daughters.

For his part, Pullo (Ray Stevenson) is a ferocious fighter, with the courage and loyalty of a warrior but the morality of a pirate. He's also a man of huge appetites and wild passions.

In Season One, he was an impulsive and hot-blooded warrior who got into all sorts of trouble. However, in Season Two, Pullo faces a new set of challenges as he becomes domesticated. Married to the former slave girl, Eirene, he thinks of leaving behind the brutal world of warriors for a more peaceful existence with the woman he loves.

Thus, Season Two of "Rome" shapes up as more of an acting vehicle for McKidd, whose character descends to the very pits of emotional and psychological hell. If the actor takes full advantage of the challenge, he could score a thespic nomination in the next Emmy awards.

Protagonists

But, "Rome" is much more than just its two "peripheral" protagonists. Major historical characters like Mark Antony and Cleopatra come on strong, albeit in new ways that sometimes even contradict their usual projection.

That's all to the good, because it makes the show more than simply the latest small-screen dusting-off of trite characters in history books.

Adding to that dynamic impression is the series' emphasis on Romans' unbridled passion and profligate lifestyles, which made violence and *sex* as commonplace to them as—pasta and pizza!

Starting May 7 and every Monday thereafter for 10 more weeks, the final season of "Rome" will compellingly draw viewers into the seething vortex of its uniquely dramatic universe. The first three episodes' plot developments include:

Episode 13: "Passions." In the wake of Caesar's murder, a tornado of contrary emotions storms across Rome. Narrowly escaping the swords of Quintus Pompey and his henchmen outside the Senate, Mark Antony decides to flee north to raise an army, and makes plans to leave the city with his paramour, Atia, her children, and Caesar's widow, Calpurnia.

But, after Atia's son with Caesar, Octavian, learns he is heir to Caesar's name and fortune, he argues it would be best for his family to remain in Rome. He goes on to propose a brilliant amnesty arrangement.

Statesman's funeral

Boldly entering Servilia's lair, Mark Antony proposes that Caesar receive a statesman's funeral, and Brutus and his co-"liberators" be acquitted of murder. However, at the funeral, a crafty Mark Antony turns the tide of public opinion against Brutus.

Meanwhile, driven to near madness, Vorenus mourns his late wife, Niobe. His friend Pullo

THE GLORY/ G4

Stars find lure of the theater irresistible

LAWRENCE (ABOVE) AND SALONGA (RIGHT). Create buzz on the Great White Way.

By Rito P. Asilo

TIME AND AGAIN, THE LEGITIMATE stage has consistently demonstrated its ability to lure film, TV and pop stars to its fold. The pay may be lower, but its career-boosting prestige and exacting, confidence-building discipline are good enough reasons for big celebrities to occasionally dabble in it.

In recent years, Julia Roberts ("Three Days of Rain"), Sean "P. Diddy" Coombs ("A Raisin in the Sun"), Meryl Streep ("The Seagull"), Keannu Reeves ("Hamlet"), Nicole Kidman ("The Blue Room"), Ewan McGregor ("Guys and Dolls"), Gerald Butler ("Trainspotting"), Clive Owen ("Closer"), Rosie O'Donnell ("Grease"), David Hasselhoff (Jekyll and Hyde") and Vanessa Williams ("Into the Woods") have graced Broadway and/or West End stages.

Acting classes

When we went to London to take some acting classes, we saw Glenn Close ("A Streetcar Named Desire"), Judi Dench and Maggie Smith ("Breath of Life"), Woody Harrelson and Kyle MacLachlan ("On An Average Day"), Daniel Craig and Michael Gambon ("A Number") strut their thespic stuff onstage—so you can imagine how thrilled we were!

These days, our very own Lea Salonga gets star billing in her Broadway comeback in "Les Miserables." The production's promo blitz heralds the return of "Tony Award winner Miss Lea Salonga" despite the limited stage time of Fantine, the character she's playing, in the well-loved MacIntosh musical.

Brothers Ralph and Joseph Fiennes continue to appear in stage plays despite heavy film work. Last year, Ralph played Frank Hardy in Jonathan Kent's "Faith Healer." This year, he appeared in Samuel Beckett's "First Love," and is scheduled to star in Sophocle's "Oedipus" next year. His brother, Joseph, was seen in the one-man play, "Unicorns, Almost," about World War II poet, Keith Douglas.

Recently, pop singer Ashley Simpson made her West End debut in "Chicago" as the murderous Roxie Hart (played by Renée Zellwegger in the film version). When Jessica saw her kid sister in the moving prison scene, she burst into tears!

BARRINO (RIGHT). Makes her professional stage debut in "The Color Purple."

Other star turns on Broadway: Heartthrob Joey Lawrence made his Broadway debut yesterday playing Billy Flynn in "Chicago" (played by Richard Gere in the movie). He will be replaced by Harry Hamlin in June.

Musical

"American Idol" Fantasia Barrino also made her Broadway debut last April 22 in the Oprah Winfrey-produced musical, "The Color Purple."

In the final performance of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" on July 29, Donny Osmond will reprise the role of Gaston. Incidentally, the role was played by Hugh Jackman in 1995.

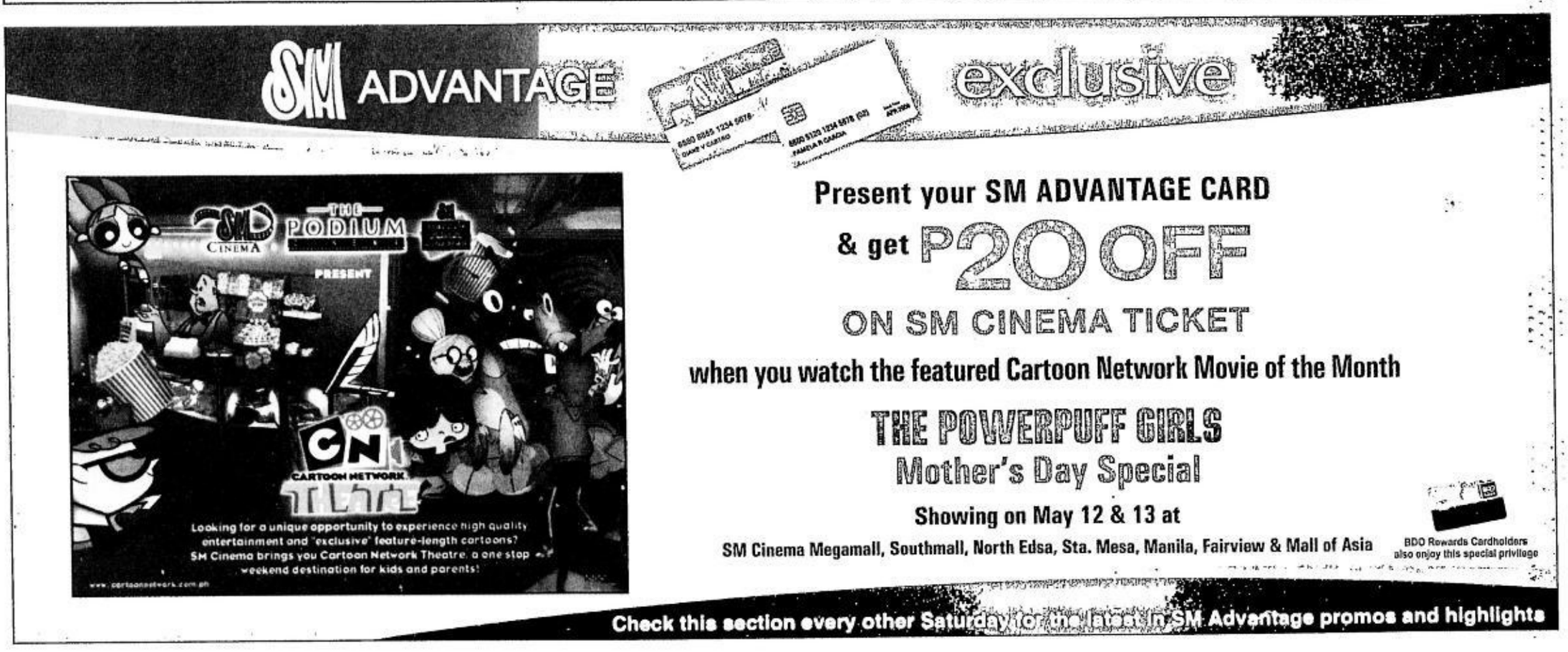
Philip Seymour Hoffman ("Capote") returned to Broadway last March in the romantic comedy, "Jack Goes Boating." Kevin Spacey will also make his Broadway comeback as frustrated actor James Tyrone in Eugene O'Neill's "The Moon of the Misbegotten." This month, Sigourney Weaver stars in the world premiere of A.R. Gurney's play, "Crazy Mary," about asylum-bound Mary (Weaver), a wealthy woman who has barely spoken in years.

On the West End: Jessica Lange is currently starring in Tennessee Williams' "The Glass Menagerie." Timeout raves about her performance: "Lange convincingly catches the domestic bossiness and girlish self-absorption of her character."

FIENNES. Continues to appear in plays despite heavy film work.

At the Gielgud Theatre, Peter Shaffer's compelling drama, "Equus," is enjoying SRO performances with advance bookings till mid-June! The obvious reason, if you haven't heard, is "Harry Potter's" Daniel Radcliffe, who displays the full monty in the production.

The reviews of Radcliffe's performance are mixed—from "monotonous" to "committed and perfectly respectable." —Not bad for a stage neophyte!



GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

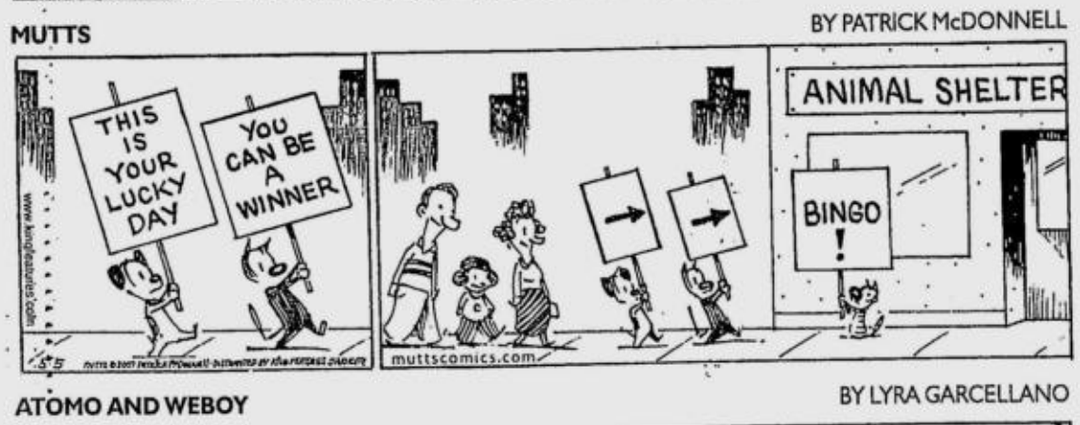
BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

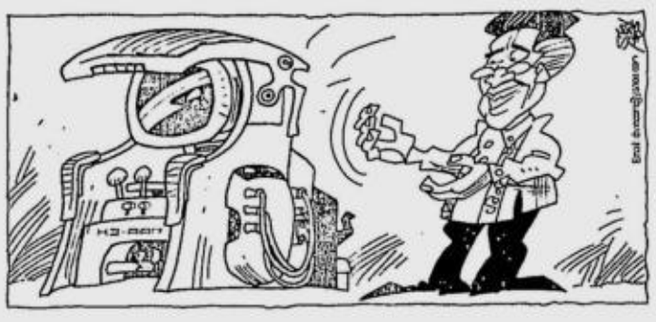
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

MAY BAGONG IMBENSYON ANG MGA SCIENTIST PARA MAGING COMPUTERIZED NA ANG CANVASSING NG MGA BOTO SA PILIPINAS TUWING ELEKSYON. NAPAKAHIGH-TECH NITO DAHIL SA LOOB LANG NG TATLONG ORAS AY MALALAMAN NA ANG RESULTA NG ELEKSYON



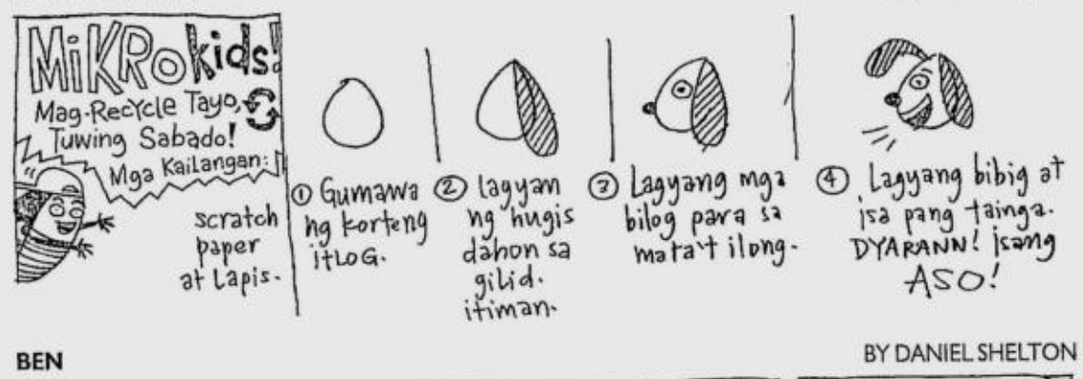
KASO NGA LANG, HINDI PA RIN ITO GINAMIT NG SAMBAYANANG PILIPINO DAHIL WALA SILANG TIWALA DITO DAHIL ANG APELYIDO YATA NG SCIENTIST NA NAKA-IMBENTO AY "ABALOS"

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

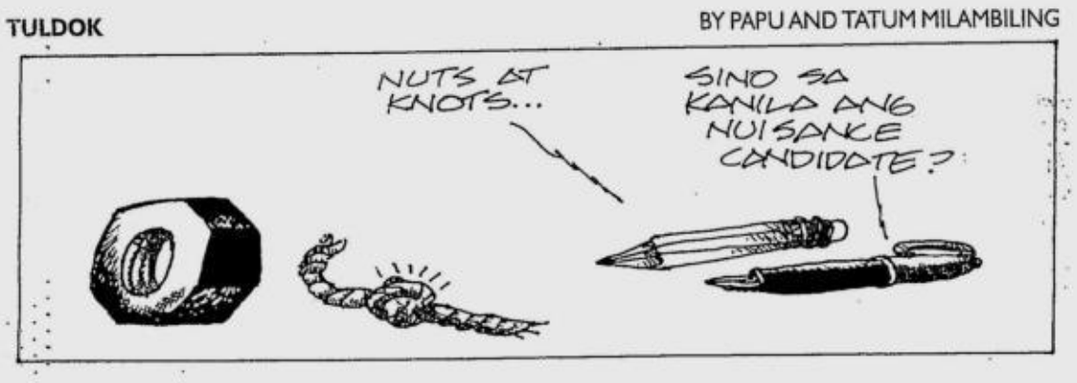
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



TULDOK

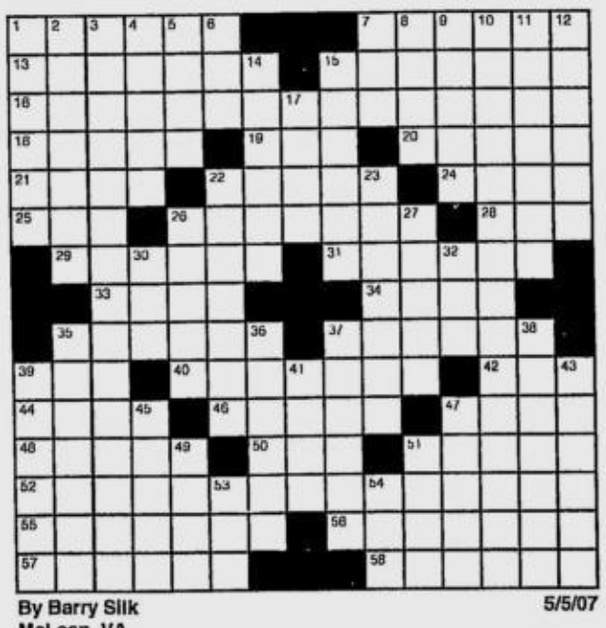
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

5/5/07

ACROSS
1 Deceived
7 Leftovers
13 Creates cryptic messages
15 Kneecap
16 Delaware feeder
18 Hens' homes
19 Singer Sumac
20 Derisive
21 Soothing balm
22 Proust character
24 Haloed one, in Le Havre
25 Chat-room ha-ha
26 Kissed noisily
28 His: Fr.
29 Comic Dangerfield
31 Mower's paths
33 Lay one's hands on
34 La __ Tar Pits
35 Geological layers
37 Indian instruments
39 Sigh of satisfaction
40 Makes an inference
42 Pretend pie ingredient
44 Lummox
46 Some IRAs
47 Corn concoction
48 Ornamental needle boxes
50 Sidekick
51 Rounds of applause
52 Leo, e.g.
55 Draws a breath
56 Penetrator
57 Restraint
58 Kind of spoon?

DOWN
1 Agave drink
2 Beyond black and white
3 Persuasion
4 Jeweler's eyepiece
5 Ice cream brand
6 State on the Atl. Coast
7 Mineo of "Exodus"
8 NFL snappers
9 Queen of Spain
10 1959 #3 hit by David Seville
11 Solemn vows
12 Indian wraps: var.
14 Tampa Bay bridge
15 Supply of lumber
17 Apple product
22 Blast furnace
23 Chat-room neophytes
26 J.C. or Sammy of golf
27 Pub projectiles
30 Austrian article
32 Earl Grey, for one
35 Soup cracker
36 Takes as one's own
37 Drag laboriously
38 Ice-cream treats
39 Gets 100 on a test
41 Beehive State
43 Catch sight of from afar
45 Singer Shore or Washington
47 Southern California ballplayer
49 Fish choice
51 Gardener, at times
53 __-de-lance
54 Sharply angled turn

Friday's Puzzle Solved

R	E	G	A	L		R	A	S	P		N	I	L	E
A	T	R	I	A		A	L	A	I		E	T	O	N
T	H	U	M	B	S	D	O	W	N		C	H	A	D
I	A	N		O	P	I	E		M	A	T	I	N	S
O	N	T	A	R	I	O		C	O	H	A	N		
			S	E	N		M	I	N	O	R	K	E	Y
S	O	F	A	R		B	O	G	E	Y		N	R	A
W	R	A	P		N	O	W	A	Y		M	O	N	K
A	C	T		M	I	X	E	R		G	A	T	E	S
P	A	C	K	A	G	E	D		H	O	W			
		H	I	G	H	S		C	O	U	R	A	G	E
C	H	A	L	E	T		B	O	O	R		B	O	A
F	O	N	T		C	O	U	N	T	M	E	O	U	T
O	N	C	E		A	N	N	E		E	L	U	D	E
S	E	E	R		P	O	K	Y		T	I	T	A	N

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HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You want to enlighten others. It's your mission in life. But you need an audience to appreciate you. You inspire others by setting an example. Justice is important to you, and you want to motivate others to embrace the principles you value. You will always defend your own rights. The year ahead is one of fresh beginnings!
Birthdate of: Alice Faye, actress; John Rhys-Davies, actor; Michael Palin, actor/writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're full of bright, new money-making ideas today. Clever you! Write some of them down. Expect to do some impulse buying today as well. Technology and modern art might appeal to you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel restless, energetic and eager for new experiences today. In fact, you feel younger! Be open to new acquaintances and new ideas that come your way. It's not a boring day.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your restless energy demands that you do something different today. You feel independent. You want more excitement in your life. Actually, this depends on you, because your choices create your world.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Expect to meet someone unusual or a bit bizarre today. Or possibly, someone you know will do something quite surprising. Either way, stay on your toes!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Bosses, parents and VIPs could throw you a curveball today. It will be interesting to see how you handle this, because you feel a bit rebellious. You don't want anyone telling you what to do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Break away from your daily routine today. Do something different. Go someplace you've never been before. Be open to new ideas and fresh learning situations.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Unexpected gifts, goodies, favors or offers from help from others could come your way today. Just say "yes"! (And "thank you," of course.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): If you're bored in your partnership, you might have a fleeting attraction to someone today. You want adventure! (Don't risk something solid and reliable for a mere bonbon.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): New technology at work or the introduction of new duties makes today a bit different. Computer crashes, power outages or other delays could throw your day sideways.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Love at first sight might take place for some of you. Exciting flirtations are possible. Parents should be extra vigilant with children today. Keep your eyes open!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): The introduction of new technology or computer-related items to your home is likely today. Expect uninvited company. Perhaps someone who is invited will not show.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Expect the unexpected today. (You want excitement.) New faces, new places and original ideas are popping up everywhere. It feels like there's electricity in the air!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			3					
	3		4			1	7	
		5			2		6	
9	7				5	4		
		8	7				3	2
	6		2			5		
	4	3			1		9	
					9			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 5/05

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	2	9	3	1	8	7	6	4
3	7	8	4	9	6	2	5	1
6	1	4	5	2	7	3	9	8
8	5	7	9	6	2	4	1	3
4	6	1	7	8	3	5	2	9
9	3	2	1	5	4	8	7	6
2	9	5	8	4	1	6	3	7
7	8	6	2	3	9	1	4	5
1	4	3	6	7	5	9	8	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 5/04

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How *not* to win votes on TV

By Nestor U. Torre

AS THE MAY 14 POLLS LOOM disconcertingly near, many senatorial candidates are scrambling to appear on as many TV shows as they can, to get badly needed exposure free of charge, to remind viewers of their candidacy just before election day. The candidates' eagerness is to be expected, but for some of them, it could prove to be counterproductive.

As some candidates' recent TV appearances indicate, a number of them don't know how to use the television medium productively, so instead of winning votes on TV, they end up losing them!

Clueless colleagues

Let's hope that other candidates learn from their clueless colleagues, and make *their* remaining TV appearances before May 14 work for, *not* against, them:

Some candidates have turned viewers off because they don't recognize that television is a "cool," intimate medium, so their loud, livid speechifying style looks too "TH" (trying-hard) on the small screen.

They should understand that TV favors natural speech and behavior, relating to the program host and viewer on a "one-on-one" basis, and the virtues of spontaneity and sincerity.

In addition, they should know how to relate to the TV camera, tone down their gestures and facial mannerisms, and go beyond "Motherhood" statements and pat generalizations.

Viewer-voters are much more tech-savvy these days, so it's harder to pull the wool over their eyes with facile promises and easy, breezy clichés.

Topic of choice

It's also very important that candidates don't read their statements on TV. The medium prefers candidates who can speak off the cuff, because this suggests that they know their topic of choice inside-out and through and through.

We make it a point to underscore this, because we recently caught some otherwise competent and qualified senatorial aspirants reading position papers on TV. This greatly diminished their effectivity as persuaders, so candidates should try to avoid this at all cost.

Some candidates also depend too much on their celebrity and good looks to win voters over. Granted, these are plus points—*but* only at the start.

After the initial positive impression is made, the "celebrity candidate" needs to fall back on other skills once the discussion focuses on problems and issues. Otherwise, they'll look and sound like they're all icing, no cake.

Hands-on approach

Candidates should also stress details, practicable solutions and the hands-on approach. No more hiding behind fond wish-fulfillment and image-boosting ploys that sound good but don't really mean much.

Past elections both here and abroad have proven TV's ability to help candidates end up in the winners' circle. But, after we analyze the successful process, we realize that part of its effectivity can be attributed to the winning candidates' astute use of the medium's strengths—its emphasis on the personal, intimate, credible and practicable.

Candidates may appear on one show after another and spend many millions of pesos on TV advertisements, but if they don't know how to effectively use the television medium, all their effort and expense will be for naught!

DIRECTOR'S CUT

Cathy Molina relies on gut feel

By Ronald G. Mangubat

IN THE FINAL SCENE OF THE movie, "You Are the One," Sam Milby rushes to Toni Gonzaga's house while a heavy downpour drenches him. On a high-angle shot, colorful umbrellas are suddenly seen opening while the big-screen lovers are caught in the downpour. That particular scene, as director Cathy Garcia-Molina recalls, was not really in the script. But using her gut feel, a sudden burst of inspiration had her staff scampering for umbrellas!

"I am not very 'scientific' as a director," Molina reveals during our interview. "It's not that I don't prepare—it's just that I rely mostly on gut feel. I study the scenes and, more often than not, something pops out of my head."

Body of work

For someone who never dreamed of becoming a film director, Molina has surprised local moviegoers with a body of work that includes four consecutive box-office hits in only two years.

But, the down-to-earth Molina feels intimidated by the accolades she has been getting. "I don't want to put myself in a position that I don't deserve," she explained. "When I was young, people used to ask me, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?,' I always answered, 'To be a good housewife.' I didn't imagine I would be directing films!"

Question & Answer:

How did you end up directing?

I was a UP film graduate. In 1992, I was an intern at Viva Films. I dabbled in film editing, but I found it boring. After graduation, I was asked to be Chito Roño's script continuity supervisor. After that, I went to Regal to become an assistant director (AD). Then, I met Ruel Agbayani, who told me Olivia Lamasan was looking for a female assistant director, it was director Loren Dyogi who gave me the break to direct for TV. At the time, he needed an AD who could scream at the cast—*ako ang tagatili!* Later still, *nauso ang tinatawag na* backpack director, which is like a second unit director. After "Milan," Star Cinema asked me to direct "Because of You."

You must have learned a lot from Chito Roño.

Oh, yes. When I first met him, the production manager told me, "*Huwag kang aanga-anga ha! Masungit si direk* Chito. But his brilliance surprised me. The way he interprets and mounts a scene, *ibang klase!* He doesn't know this, but he was a big influence on me. The same is true with *direk* Olive. She won't stop until she gets what she wants.

Do you scream?

Definitely! But, let me explain: I'm a jolly person, in general. I crack jokes—I don't like a quiet set. Problem is, when I lose my temper—like what happened on the set of "You Got Me"—*lumipad ang mga dapat lumipad!* (Laughs)

How did you like working with Sam Milby and Toni Gonzaga?

Napagalitan ko rin sila! Harutan nang harutan, because they were so close to each other. But, they're both good actors. With Sam, there was a language problem in the beginning—because I had to give the instructions in English, *e hindi naman ako masyadong matatas mag*-Ingles. *(Laughs)*

Interpreters

For example I would tell him, "You have to say '*bastos*.' And he'd say, 'What's *bastos*?' *Naku,* I had to look for interpreters to explain *bastos* to him! But, Sam is intelligent, and he gets into character easily.

This is the era of indie films. Would you like to direct one?

MOLINA. Wants to do an action movie.

I am scared of doing an indie film because I think indie directors are so good. I can't do what they can! I was trained to make films commercially. Indies can also get extremely quiet. You can't do that in mainstream movies, because the audience has to be entertained continually.

What sort of films would you want to do next?

Well, the next one is going to be sort of a musical starring Sarah Geronimo and John Lloyd. We're still selling the idea to the management. I'd also like to do an action movie one day. My favorite is John Woo's "Face Off." I think he gave a new dimension to the term action films.

How does it feel to be a woman in an industry dominated by men?

Men *nga ba sila?* (Laughs) No, seriously, it doesn't bother me. I also have a masculine side. I can relate well to men.

What lesson or value do you want to consistently impart in your films?

I always want to say that a person shouldn't blame others for what he or she has turned out to be. Your parents or friends may have contributed to the person that you've become, but in the end, you make your life. You make the decision.

Critics say your films click with the *masa*. How do you achieve that?

I'm one of them—I know them. Even my humor is very *Pinoy*. I can't relate to American or European humor. *Ay, masa ako, sobra!* To the highest level! *(Laughs)*

More performances set for 'Nasaan si Hesus?'

MONTAGE

THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF Bing Pimentel's religious musical revue, "Nasaan si Hesus?," at StarMall Las Piñas was such a hit that its proud presenter, Promotions and Events Partner, has decided to show it every other Saturday in the next two months.

On May 19 and June 2, "Nasaan si Hesus?" will be performed at 5 and 8 p.m. at the popular mall's Activity Center. For tickets or additional performances in your parish, school or office, call 872-5903 or 0917 998-1113.

'Rumble Jumble Summer Holiday'

This month, Nickelodeon will excite viewers with a "rumble jumble" of summer specials, TV movie treats, and all-new episodes of its top shows. Last May 1, "Rugrats" led off with its "Preschool Daze" episode, followed by "Finders Keepers" at 12:30 and 6 p.m., and "As Told by Ginger" at 1 and 6:30 p.m.

Starting May 18 at 7 p.m., "Brand New Fridays" features Casper High's heroic phantom fighter, "Danny Phantom."

Catch "Blue's Clues" 100th episode, in which friend Steve visits and dons a tuxedo with Joe—on May 29 at 7:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

In "Fairly Oddparents," Cosmo and Wanda might quit because Norm the Genie is back to avenge himself on Timmy and become a fairy. Catch this special treat on May 29 at 1 and 5:30 p.m.

Finally, the 20th Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards Preview Party is set on May 26 at the Aliw Theater. Who among Christian Bautista, John Lloyd Cruz, Angel Locsin, Makisig Morales and Lea Salonga will win as this year's "Pinoy Wannabe" awardee? Get voting forms from Toy Kingdom stores, and you could be a part of the Nickelodeon KCA Toy Run. Or log on to www.nicksplat,com/kca for another way to vote.

LOPEZ. Releases first Spanish album.

'Light at the Edge of the World'

On NGC, "Light" follows explorer Wade Davis as he tracks four indigenous cultures, each uniquely dedicated to the preservation of their customs in the face of modernization. On May 7 at 9 p.m., Davis visits pan-andean Peru.

Also on NGC, "Chasing Che" features two young Latin Americans who search for their identities throughout South America. On May 9 at 9 p.m., Beatriz and Gustavo tour Argentina.

Mom's Month at StarMall

On May 13 at StarMall Edsa, a Mom's Day Pangkabuhayan Demo will be held at the activity area. May 20 marks the grand finals of Little Miss Jollibee. And Star Babe eliminations are on May 10, 17 and 24, with the grand finals on May 26. The hip-hop Beat by Beat Dance Competition will be held tomorrow. And the winning boutique in the mall's Summer Dress Up Your Store Contest will be announced on May 31.

'Como Ama Una Mujer'

Jennifer Lopez shows how a woman loves in her first Spanish album, "Somo Ama Una Mujer." The 11-track disc is presented in cooperation with JLo Glow After Dark Fragrance. Get a free vial with every purchase of the album at Music One outlets until May 21.

'Agent X-44'

Vhong Navarro's zany starrer, "Agent X-44," is now out on video.

THE VHONG Navarro starrer is now on video.

Joyce Bernal directs the spoof of secret agent movies. The DVD includes the film's trailer, behind-the-scene takes and Vhong's "Chickboy" music video.

'How It's made'

Discovery Channel's show, "How It's Made," brings viewers behind the scenes of the manufacturing process of ordinary things, from hockey pucks to frozen French fries. Beginning May 10, new episodes of the show air every Thursday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 1 p.m.

Tomorrow at 8 p.m. on Discovery, "X Revolution" also premieres. The show profiles the history of cell phones and sports utility vehicles (SUVs).

Ball, Hepburn proved even redheads have fun

By Behn Cervantes

"GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONdes"—so goes a famous Hollywood adage. But stars with other colors in their tresses have their fun, too. For example, Cleopatra, Mata Hari and Jezebel were unforgettable brunettes.

Giving both tinted sets stiff competition were Hollywood's famous redheads, who were just as spirited, feisty and unpredictable. Like Clara Bow. During the age of the Charleston, she represented the free-wheeling woman.

Intellectual

Another famous redhead was Katharine Hepburn, the Connecticut Yankee who graduated from Bryn Mawr. Her father was an intellectual, while her mother a suffragette who was one of the founders of Kate's alma mater. The principled couple raised their freckled daughter to be strong-willed and frugal beyond reason.

DAHL. Probably the most beautiful big-screen redhead.

She formulated a contract never before seen in Hollywood—and got her way. She kept a secret liaison with married Spencer Tracy for decades. This legendary redhead brought home an unprecedented four Academy Awards-and a record number of nominations! Only the sublime Meryl Streep, a blonde Yale alumna, has a more impressive record.

In the late '30s and early '40s, Hollywood's leading redheads were Irish imports Greer Garson and Maureen O'Hara. The two actresses were tall, regal and feisty. Garson could tame the likes of Walter Pidgeon, while O'Hara put John Wayne in his place.

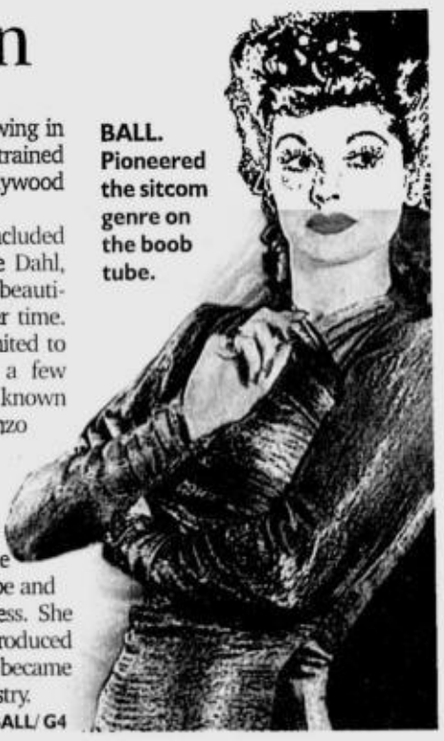
Memorable

Garson gave finely tuned performances opposite Pidgeon, most memorably in the Oscar-winning film, "Mrs. Miniver." Maureen, on the other hand, was memorable in "The Quiet American." Following in their footsteps was Bristol-trained Deborah Kerr, who was a Hollywood star for 30 years.

Other notable redheads included Rhonda Fleming and Arlene Dahl, who was probably the most beautiful big-screen redhead in her time. However, her career was limited to lightweight comedies, and a few musicals. She is now better known as the mother of Lorenzo Lamas.

Probably the reddest of the redheads was Lucille Ball. After limited success in Tinseltown, Ball pioneered the sitcom genre on the boob tube and earned millions in the process. She and husband Desi Arnaz produced the "Lucille Ball Show"—and became power players in the TV industry.

BALL/ G4



BALL. Pioneered the sitcom genre on the boob tube.

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

Urine as therapy

A FEW YEARS AGO, WE WROTE on the subject of urine therapy and received positive feedback. Here's more information about its beneficial and healing nature from the book, "Health in Your Hands" by Devendra Vora, who discusses the use of acupressure and other forms of healing treatments such as urine therapy

URINE/ G4

The glory that was 'Rome'...

From page G1

helps him arrange a proper funeral. Learning that Erastes has abducted Voranus' daughters and son, Lucius, the two soldiers seek justice with a deadly visit to Erastes' hangout.

Episode 14: "Son of Hades." Cleopatra arrives in Rome to pay her respects to the new Caesar and win Mark Antony's favor. Her arrival rankles Atia, who insults the Egyptian queen at a dinner party. Timon comes home to find that his brother, Levi, has unexpectedly arrived from Jerusalem, his disdain for all things Roman intact.

Meanwhile, Erastes' death has plunged the Avantine Collegium and Rome's river commence into chaos. To restore order, Mark Antony orders Vorenus to assume Erastes' captaincy, and Vorenus bullies the warring gangs into an uneasy truce.

Frustrated by Mark Antony in his attempt to serve his inheritance, Octavian takes out a loan to pay off Caesar's promise to the people, infuriating his mother and Mark Antony, who refuses the boy's offer of a power-sharing strategic alliance. The violent confrontation that follows leads to Octavian's departure from Rome.

Nomadic

Episode 15: "These Being the Words of Marcus Tullius Cicero." As the nomadic Brutus and Cassius struggle to raise money for an army, Mark Antony sets his sights on Gaul. Cicero delivers an *in-absentia* message to the Senate, then throws his support to Octavian, the new Caesar.

Meanwhile, Vorenus is in a battle of his own having provoked an all-out gang war in the Aventine Collegium. And, at Atia's villa,

ALLEN Leech portrays a Roman gladiator.

Octavia (Octavian's sister) passes the hours getting high on hemp, while Duro, a duplicitous youth, looks for the chance to set Sevilia's deadly plan in motion.

Urine as...

From page G3

for the management of common ailments.

He explains, "Even medical doctors in the West have accepted that, to fight the presence of toxins in the body, our system creates antibodies. During sleep, our body manufactures them, so they are considerably found in the first urine sample as we wake up in the morning.

Requirements

"So if this first 'sample' is drunk or consumed, the body will in turn get the requirements it needs from those early-morning deposits—like salts, etc. This is the principle behind urine therapy. After Japanese medical specialists realized its medicinal value, they started preparing costly injections for commercial consumption."

Vora relates that, in some places in India, criminals who are caught and punished drink their urine soon after they're captured so that even if they get heavily beaten, their recovery would be faster.

Advocate

A former Prime Minister of India was an advocate of the procedure. Sri Morarjibhai Desai would drink and use his urine for massage! Vora reveals: "That's the secret of his reddish tinge even at age 96—he has no wrinkles, and his skin is healthy and glowing.

"By drinking his urine and using it as eye wash, he has proven that it can also prevent the onset of cataract. It's beneficial even for chronic diseases. Dr. Bitrice Barter has also claimed to cure Aids patients using this therapy."

Here's how: Let the first drops pass, then collect from midstream in a glass and drink. It can be use for different parts of the body:

Eyes. Use as an eye wash after urine has cooled down. It is said to maintain good eyesight and cure the beginning of cataract.

Teeth. For dental problems, gargle for at least five minutes.

Hair. Massage on hair and scalp to make hair soft and silky. It clears away dandruff and germs.

Skin. It can heal white spots, gangrene and eczema. Warm the first urine, then let it cool down. Remove resulting crust. Soak cotton in lukewarm urine and massage affected parts for two to five minutes (but massage ice on affected parts for two to three minutes before doing so). Wash with clean water.

Ears. Use urine as ear drops. (We have a friend who took antibiotics for weeks to get rid of an ear infection—it didn't work. But, when she used urine, the problem quickly vanished.)

SATURDAY Special

SMITH. Acted in a budget movie that satirized Hollywood.

Anna Nicole's last role fodder for self-parody

ANNA NICOLE SMITH WAS NEVER CONSIDered a serious actress, and she's unlikely to win any posthumous film awards for her last role as a goofy, flatulent superhero. She's part of a trio of alien personae protecting Earth.

Persona

Yet, the low-budget B-movie comedy, "Illegal Aliens," does show an intriguing side of Smith, a person aware of the silliness surrounding her persona—and someone willing to go to extremes to make fun of it! Early on in the movie, three months after Smith's death there's a clip from Smith's reality-TV show, in which she devours a life-size cake made in her own image.

"Eating her own image, that's what she does in the movie," said David Giancola, director of "Illegal Aliens," on which Smith was a producer and her late son, Daniel Smith, was associate producer. "She really wanted people to laugh. Anna and Daniel wanted to make a movie that satirized Hollywood and ourselves to a great extent."

Smith and her son were among the top investors in the movie, which cost under $3 million to make. Plans to release the movie were delayed after Daniel Smith died from a drug overdose last year. Smith's share of the profits will go to her infant daughter, Dannielynn. *AP*

Catch the **EARLY** and **LATE NIGHT** screenings of **SPIDERMAN 3** at the

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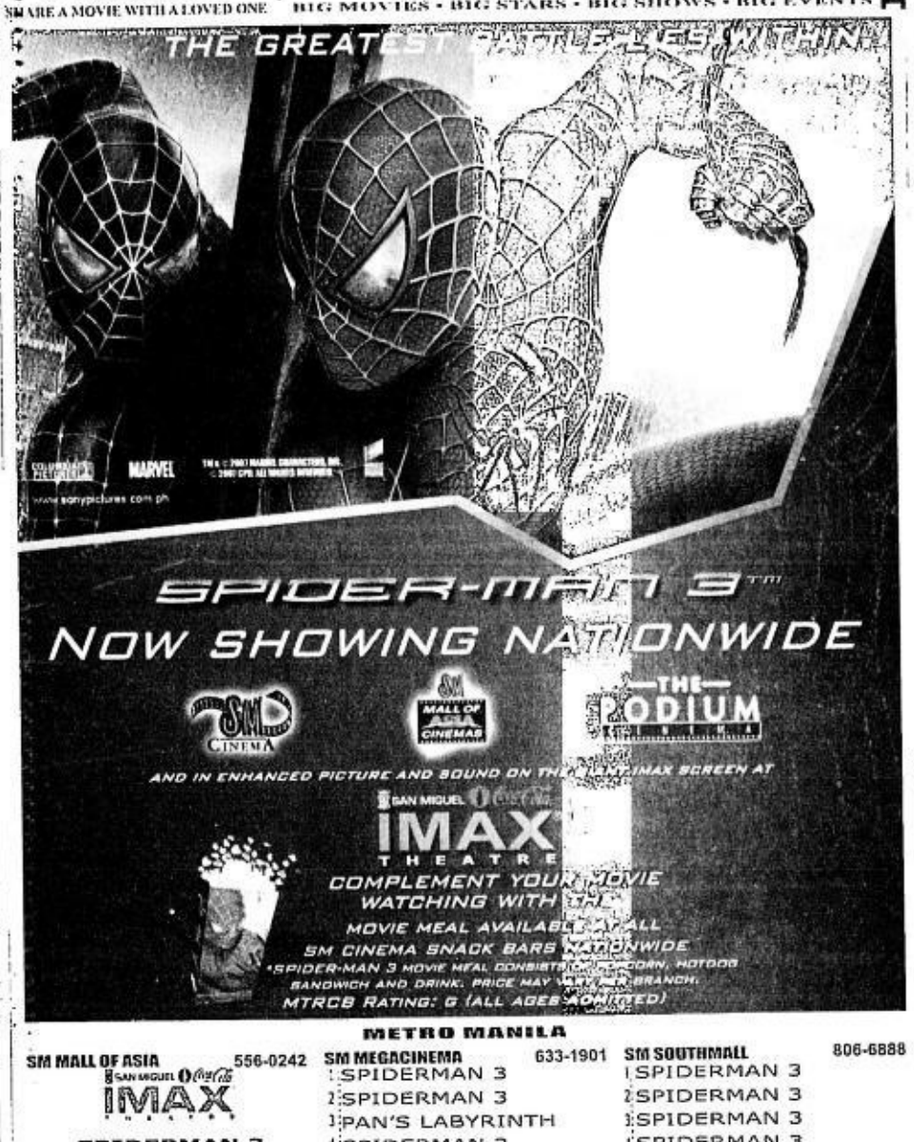

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(2D)
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2 SPIDERMAN 3
3 THE REAPING
4 THE SHOOTER/ SPIDERMAN 3
5 SPIDERMAN 3/ PERFECT STRANGER
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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CENTERSTAGE
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7 SPIDERMAN 3
8 PAN'S LABYRINTH/ SPIDERMAN 3
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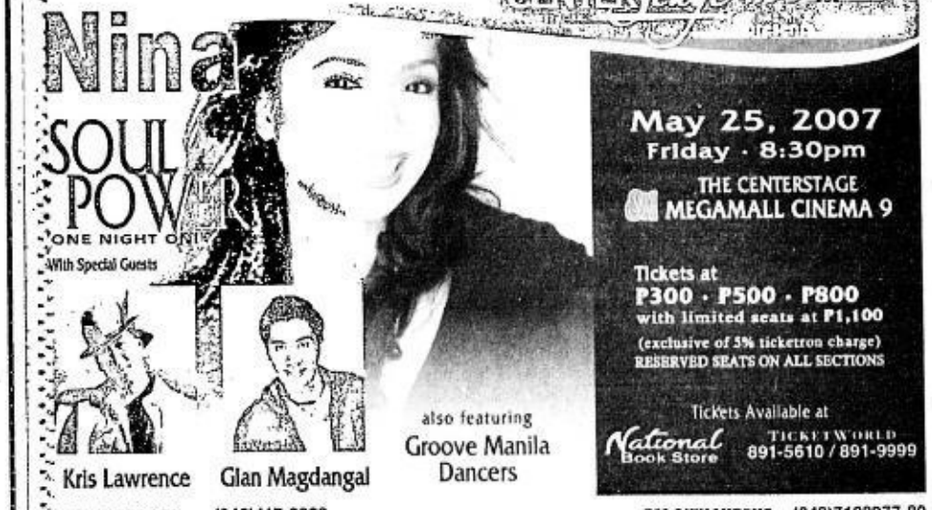
SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR



SATURDAY*Special*

More poll bets for the arts

By Nestor U. Torre

ASIDE FROM SOME senatorial aspirants, a number of candidates for local posts are also bent on boosting the arts. Manila mayoralty bet **Ali Atienza** comes from a family of artists: His parents were both members of the Bayanihan Dance Company, and two of his siblings, Kim and Chichi, are stage performers.

Ali can be expected to sustain the Atienzas' artistic and cultural initiatives, like dance and theater programs for streetchildren, and barangay performance tours of outstanding artists and performing groups.

ATIENZA. Comes from a family of artists.

Running for Manila City councilor in the sixth district is actor **Lou Veloso**, whose past cultural initiatives in the city include the Santa Ana Arts Center, touring productions, parks and workshops. Veloso is a firm believer in the transformative and healing power of arts and culture.

In Batangas province, gubernatorial bet **Vilma Santos-Recto** bids fair to enhance Batangueños' cultural and artistic lives. With her long and distinguished experience as film and thespic artist, she is fully aware of how the arts bring out the best in people and challenge them to fulfill their potential.

Humane

As for culture, it provides people with the ethical context that makes them humane more than just human.

Unknown to many, Vilma, the "grand slam" acting awardee, is also very interested in directing. In fact, she has directed a TV movie.

This interest in directing, we feel, reveals more about Vilma's artistic ethos than her much better-known experience and expertise in acting. Actors are admirable, but they focus mainly on the characters assigned to them.

On the other hand, directors have to be involved in all aspects of a production—and, more importantly, they provide it with its organizing point of view and vision.

This larger perspective requires the director to have a full understanding of and appreciation for the power of the arts to make life meaningful.

Still in Batangas, Vilma's "signature" leading man, **Christopher de Leon** is running for vice-governor, albeit on another ticket. Like his perennial leading lady, Christopher is not just a film artist, but also an arts lover.

Stage musical

Even before he acted in his first film, he performed in the stage musical, "Godspell," where he came across as a "giving" performer. He has also appeared in other theater productions, like "They're Playing Our Song." And he shares that one of his plans is to produce a religious musical for Oasis of love.

These and other local candidates know how the arts can enhance and transform the nation, and thus are sorely needed in our country's efforts to pull itself out of the quagmire of corruption, mediocrity and physical and moral poverty that has kept us from coming into our own as a people. This is a struggle worth fighting—and winning!

VELOSO. Cultural initiatives.

'Suroy-Suroy sa Cebu'

ISLAND-HOPPING takes off at Shangri-La Mactan.

FINE dining at Abaca restaurant.

MARIBAGO Bluewater Island Resort.

CEBU, ACCORDING TO ITS GOVERNOR, Gwen Garcia, is "a province proud of its rich heritage, confident in seeing the realization of the bright future that is its birthright."

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

Cebu is the new tourist destination in Asia, a place you can reach in an hour through air travel from Manila or 22 hours by sea. These days, some tourists skip Manila and fly directly to Cebu.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano welcomes the influx of tourists to Cebu, which has beautiful white beaches with clear blue waters. It's also one of the world's best dive sites.

Export items

Cebu has an excellent track record in business. It leads in the production of export items like furniture, fashion accessories, toys and housewares.

Shangri-La Mactan is one of Cebu's top luxury hotels. It boasts of a sprawling garden, a golf course, and a fabulous beach with white sand.

Historical landmarks abound within the city. The original image of the Sto. Niño is most sought after. The Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño, Fort San Pedro and its museum, and Magellan's Cross are among the must-see sights in Cebu.

Garden

Next stop on the itinerary is the Maribago Bluewater Island Resort. It boasts of a breathtaking garden.

Dinner at the Abaca fine-dining restaurant gives a full view of the setting sun.

If you're looking for a new vacation experience or a place to invest in, Cebu is an ideal destination. Five international airlines fly to the southern metropolis. "Suroy-Suroy sa Cebu" is spearheaded by Governor Garcia.

☆☆☆

Watch out for the Mandy Navasero Cebu Photo Safari. Call 899-1767.

Pirates have invaded Enchanted Kingdom!

Pirates 4D

So treat your senses and catch the latest 4D movie, Pirates, starring Leslie Nielsen and Eric Idle! Now showing this summer.

Park Schedule

May 1 – June 3	Mondays - Fridays	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm
	Saturdays & Sundays*	10:00 am – 10:00 pm
May 14 (Election Day)	Monday* (Holiday Rate)	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm

*Fireworks display every Saturday, Sunday, and on Holidays.

Buy as many as 12 tickets per day with your Suki Card!
Call 830-2111 to 16 for more details.

Enchanted Kingdom™
The magic stays with you.

Park Address: San Lorenzo South, City of Santa Rosa, Laguna • Tel. Nos. 843 60 74 to 78 Makati Sales Office: Ground Floor, The Biltmore Condominium, 102 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Tel. No. 830-21-11 to 16

IAAPA

Website:www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph • Email: eldarthewizard@enchantedkingdom.com.ph

3 Enchanted Tickets mean 4 happy friends!

2 heads are better than 1 but 3 heads get 1 more friend into Enchanted Kingdom absolutely FREE with the EK Barkada 3+1 Summer promo!

Head on over to the Makati Sales Office located at the Ground Floor of the Biltmore Condominium, 102 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City to buy your three (3) EK Day Passes and you get one (1) more pass FREE!

If you're a Mercury Drug Suki Cardholder or Employee, you can choose to go straight to Enchanted Kingdom and avail of your 3+1 EK Day Passes there or purchase your tickets at the Makati Sales Office, whatever's convenient for you!

mercury drug
Suki Card
Customer Value Card
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So round up the barkada and visit Enchanted Kingdom this summer!

Promo runs from April 1 to June 3, 2007 only.

Per DTI Laguna Permit # S-03-118 Series of 2007

glorietta · GREENBELT · ALABANG TOWN CENTER · AYALA CENTER CEBU · MARKET! MARKET! · Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS
THX
Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 SPIDER-MAN 3	3 SPIDER-MAN 3	4 SPIDER-MAN 3
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 SPIDER-MAN 3	3 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SHOOTER	5 SPIDER-MAN 3	6 SPIDER-MAN 3	7 SPIDER-MAN 3
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 FIREHOUSE DOG		2 SPIDER-MAN 3	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 SPIDER-MAN 3	
	3 SPIDER-MAN 3	4 SPIDER-MAN 3	5 SPIDER-MAN 3	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 SPIDER-MAN 3	3 SPIDER-MAN 3	4 SPIDER-MAN 3
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SPIDER-MAN 3		2 SPIDER-MAN 3	
	3 CUTE ANG INA MO	4 SPIDER-MAN 3	5 SPIDER-MAN 3	

At the Activity Center

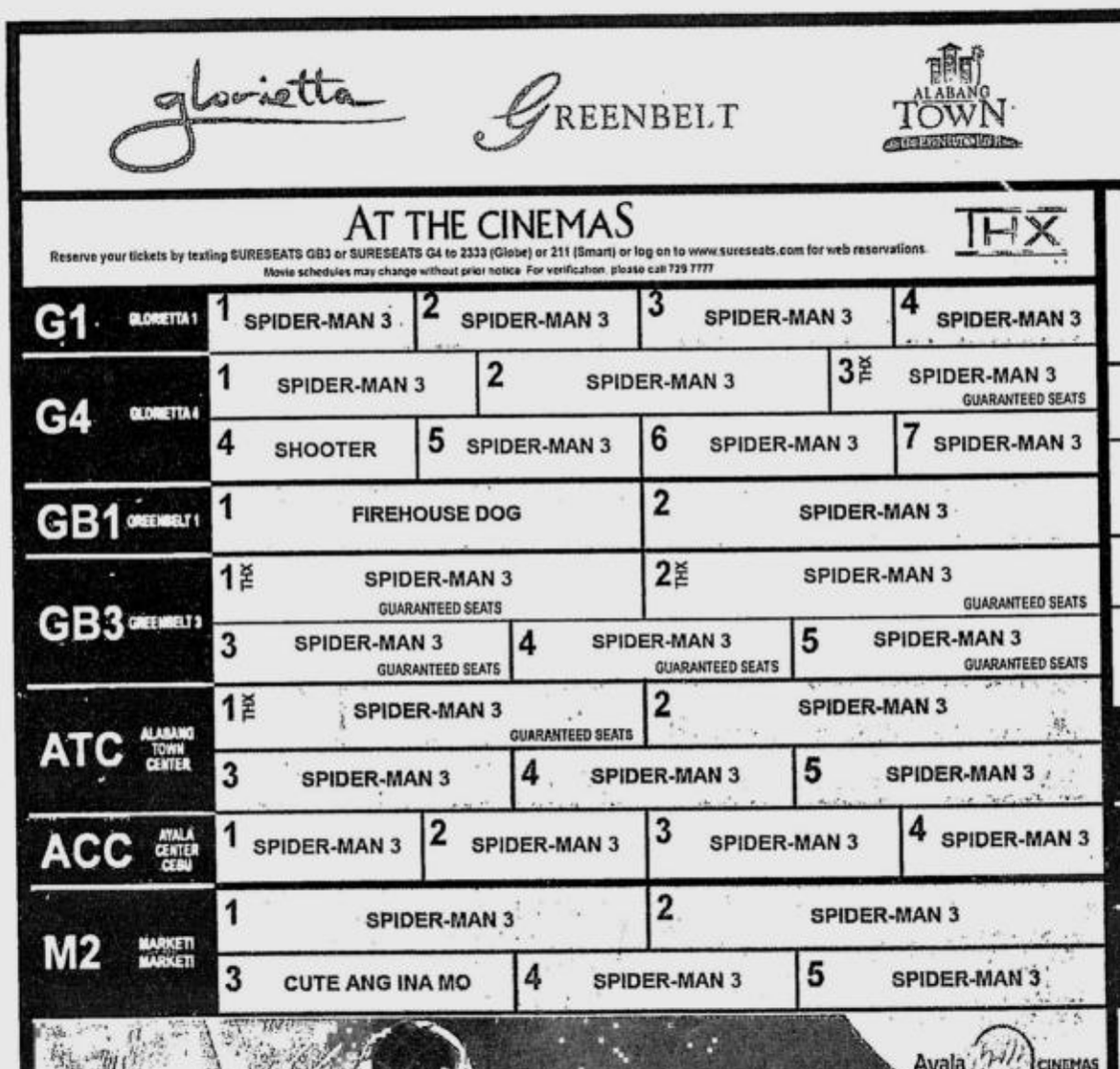
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm; Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm; Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm; Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324; Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Toby's Sports Event April 27 to 29, 2007	Huggies Interactive May 5 to 6, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Bazaar at level 1 (near Activity Center) April 1 to 30, 2007	The Maestro Series by Ryan Cayabyab April 30, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents A Collection of Myth feat. Randy Ortiz, Ivarluski Asescon, Jojie Loren & Joey Samson, April 25 to May 6, 2007

OnStage — Repertory Philippines presents GLORIOUS at REP's Globe Theater - April 13 to 29, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows). Ongoing until May 27, 2007. For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org



Ayala CINEMAS
THE GREATEST BATTLE LIES WITHIN.
SPIDER-MAN 3.
BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!

AYALA MALLS CINEMAS' SPIDER-MAN 3 SCREENING SCHEDULES FOR MAY 4 (FRI.) ONLY

GLORIETTA 4
Cinema 1* - 11:00am, 2:00pm, 5:00, 8:00, 11:00
Cinema 2* - 12:00nn, 3:00pm, 6:00, 9:00, 12:00mn
Cinema 3** - 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30
Cinema 4 - 4:00 pm, 7:00, 10:00
Cinema 5 - 3:00 pm, 6:00, 9:00
Cinema 6 - 12:30 pm, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
Cinema 7 - 10:30 am, 1:30 pm, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:00nn, 3:00pm, 6:00, 9:00
Cinema 2 - 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5:30, 8:30
Cinema 3 - 12:30pm, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
Cinema 4 - 1:00pm, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1** - 11:50am, 2:40pm, 5:30, 8:20, 11:10
Cinema 2 - 11:20am, 2:10pm, 5:00, 7:50, 10:40
Cinema 3 - 10:55am, 1:45pm, 4:35, 7:25, 10:15
Cinema 4 - 10:25 am, 1:15pm, 4:05, 6:55, 9:45
Cinema 5 - 11:25 am, 2:15 pm, 5:05, 7:55, 10:45

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1** - 1:50pm, 4:40, 10:20
Cinema 2** - 1:20 pm, 4:10, 12:30
Cinema 3* - 2:20 pm, 5:10, 8:00, 10:50
Cinema 4* - 12:05 pm, 2:55, 5:45, 8:35, 11:25
Cinema 5* - 12:40 pm, 3:30, 6:20, 9:10, 12:00

GREENBELT 1
OnStage - 12:45 pm, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45
Cinema 1 - 4:30 pm, 7:30, 10:20
Cinema 2 - 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30

MARKET! MARKET!
Cinema 1* - 12:00nn, 3:00pm, 6:00, 9:00
Cinema 4 - 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5:30, 8:30
Cinema 5 - 10:30am, 1:30pm, 4:30, 7:30
Cinema 6 - 12:30pm, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
Cinema 7 - 1:00 pm, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 1 - 1:00pm, 3:30, 6:20, 9:30
Cinema 2 - 1:30pm, 4:00, 6:50, 10:00
Cinema 3 - 12:30pm, 3:00, 5:50, 9:00

**THX & Guaranteed Seat Cinema
*Digital Sound & Guaranteed Seat Cinema
Screening schedules are subject to change without prior notice. For verification, pls. call 729 7777

Visit our cinema ticketbooths or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservation.

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Ayala Malls

A ONE SHOT ENCOUNTER WITH
NIGEL BARKER

Get inspiring tips on fashion photography from Nigel Barker, celebrity photographer and judge of America's Next Top Model as he hits Manila this May.

Greenbelt 3 Park
May 10 • 7pm
Concierge Hotline: 757 -4853

Alabang Town Center
Activity Center
May 11 • 6pm
Concierge Hotlines: 842-2782 / 772-1860

GREENBELT · ALABANG TOWN CENTER

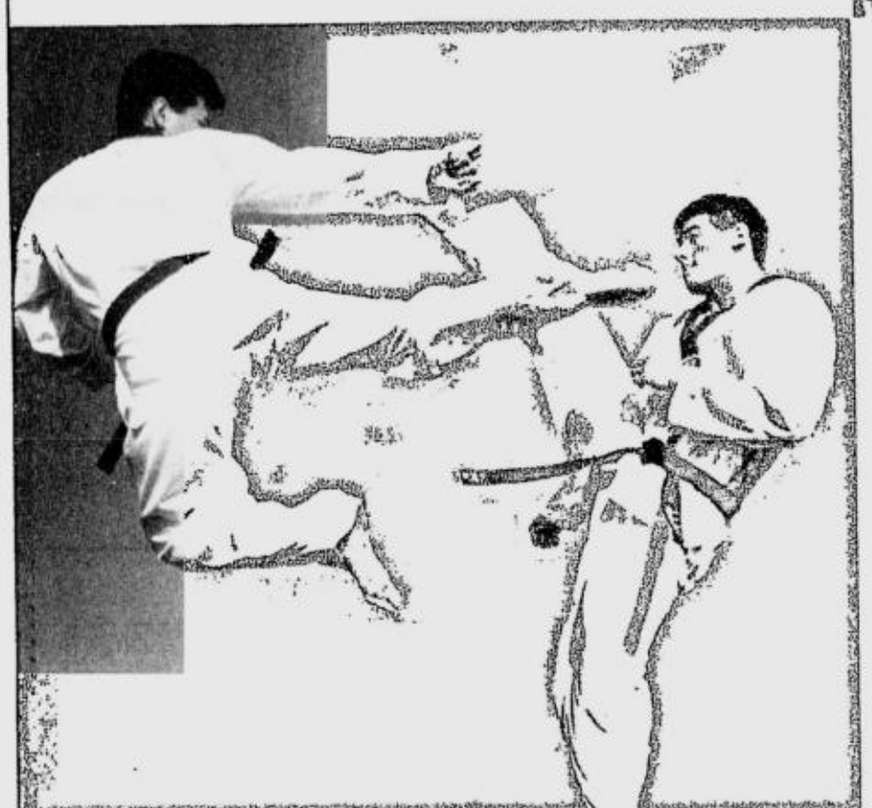
Summer Sports at SM

Summer is here, and that means it's time to do sports this season.

What better place to spend summer than in SM malls. Experience a sporty summer indoors by doing sports in our malls. It's sure to be an athletic fun time for the whole family!

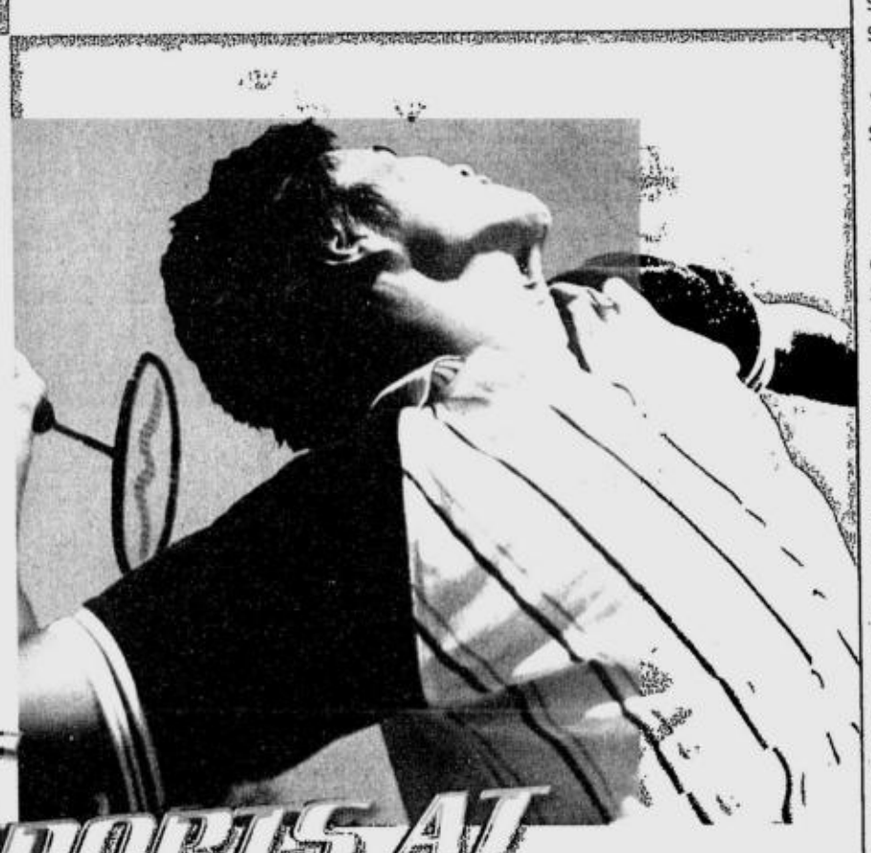
shop

for equipment and gear



learn

in sports clinics and events



play

in sporting tournaments

SM CITY NORTH EDSA - SM CITY FAIRVIEW - SM CITY MANILA
SM CITY SAN LAZARO - SM MEGAMALL - SM CITY STA. MESA
SM CITY BICUTAN - SM CITY SUCAT - SM CITY BACOOR
SM SOUTHMALL - SM CITY DASMARIÑAS - SM CITY BATANGAS
SM CITY MARILAO - SM CITY PAMPANGA - SM CITY BAGUIO
SM CITY LUCENA - SM CITY CEBU - SM CITY ILOILO
SM CITY DAVAO - SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA - SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
SM CITY STA. ROSA - SM CITY LIPA - SM CITY CLARK
SM SUPERCENTER PASIG - SM CITY BACOLOD - SM MALL OF ASIA

Summer Sports at SM

SM SUPERMALLS

Mall Event Highlights

Darts
Hit the bullseye in these malls!

SM City Sta. Mesa	May 6
SM City Bacoor	May 20
SM City San Lazaro	May 27

Aerobics & Dance

SM City Clark	May 30-31
SM City Baguio	May 16
SM Supercenter Valenzuela	May 19
SM City Pampanga	May 10,15,17,24,29,31

Taekwondo

SM City Clark	May 15,17,19,22,24,27,29,31
SM City Bacolod	May 5-29
SM City Pampanga	May 14,16
SM City Pampanga	May 8,15,22,29 by the Music Studio

Chess

SM City Lipa	May 5-18
SM Supercenter Valenzuela	May 27
SM City Sucat	May 12-13
SM Supercenter Molino	May 18-19

Table Tennis

SM City North Edsa	May 19,20,26,27

Badminton

SM Megamall	May 26-27
SM Southmall	May 5-6
SM City Sucat	May 19-27

Basketball

SM City Batangas	May 19-20
SM City Cebu	June 16-17
SM Southmall	Weekends of May

Wushu

SM City Bicutan	May 19

Jiujitsu

SM Mall of Asia	May 12-13
SM Southmall	May 19
SM City Bacoor	May 20
SM City San Lazaro	May 27

Karate

SM City Lipa (AAK Super Karate)	May 20

Arnis

SM Southmall	May 20

Kuntaw/ Sikaran/ Silat/ Jendu
More exciting Filipino Martial arts!

SM City San Lazaro , SM City Manila & SM City Sta. Mesa	May 19
SM City Bicutan	May 20
SM Megamall	May 25

Wall Climbing

SM Southmall	Weekends of May with relaunch on May 26-27

Bowling
6th SM Bowling Cup National Finals

SM City Cebu	May 12
SM City Fairview	May 12,20 (North Edsa Slot)
SM Megamall	May 13,26,27
SM City Fairview	May 20

Ice Skating
Summer Skate

SM Mall of Asia	May 15,16,17

Other Sports Events

SM City Lucena	May 5
1st K Servico & STRF Bike Fest & Motorshow *(Slow Riding, Obstacle Race, Bottle Straw & Exhibitions)*	
SM Mall of Asia	May 5-6
Soccer Mania	
SM Megamall	May 9
Nat'l Cheerleading Champs	
SM City Davao	May 18
Matina South Health Studio & Smash Ville Fitness Center Summer Workshop Culmination	
SM Southmall	May 20
Elorde Boxing Exhibition Matches	
SM City Cagayan de Oro	May 25-26
Skateboarding Competition	
SM Mall of Asia	May 27
Nat'l Dodgeball Championship	
SM City Davao	Tues, Wed, Thurs of May
Ballet Workshop	

1st National Filipino Martial Arts Festival

YND

Please send feedback to
jsarmiento@inquirer.com.ph

VOTERS' ELEKSYON 2007 GUIDE

Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

NINE DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, many Filipinos have yet to choose the national and local candidates they will vote for. The country has at least 45 million registered voters.

At stake on May 14 are 17,889 elective posts, including 12 seats in the Senate and 275 seats in the House of Representatives.

Senatorial candidates have barnstormed the country to present themselves to the voters. In the sorties, they are pressed for time to explain their programs. More often than not, they just wave and smile at the crowds.

A 15-second or 30-second TV ad doesn't help much in explaining the platforms of government of the candidates. So candidates, who have raised enough funds for the costly TV ads, deliver motherhood statements.

Voters' Guide is running the views of the senatorial candidates on five issues to help the public come up with an informed choice on Election Day. The issues are the "Hello Garci" scandal, legitimacy of the Arroyo presidency, reforming the Commission on Elections, "turncoatism" (party switching), and the proposed shift to the parliamentary form of government.

The "Hello Garci" scandal refers to the supposed tapped phone conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which the two supposedly discussed ways to rig the 2004 presidential election in her favor.

The views of the senatorial candidates on green issues and on political killings and militant party-list groups were run in Talk of the Town on April 22 and April 29, respectively. Talk will print the stand of the senatorial candidates on political dynasty and importation of low-priced medicines tomorrow.

Voters' Guide also provides readers with information about the different positions up for grabs, qualifications that someone must have before he or she can run for an elective office, absentee voting, party-list system, new legislative districts and provinces, and forms of cheating. *(See Fast Facts on Page 4.)*

FEDERATION OF PHILIPPINE INDUSTRIES, INC. (FPI)

BATAYAN SA PAGPILI NG KANDIDATO

T - TAPAT SA PAMILYA AT BAYAN.
A - ANGKOP SA POSISYONG KANYANG MINIMITHI.
U - UNA ANG SERBISYO HINDI ANG BISYO.
S - SERBISYONG TOTOO SA BAYAN AT TAO.

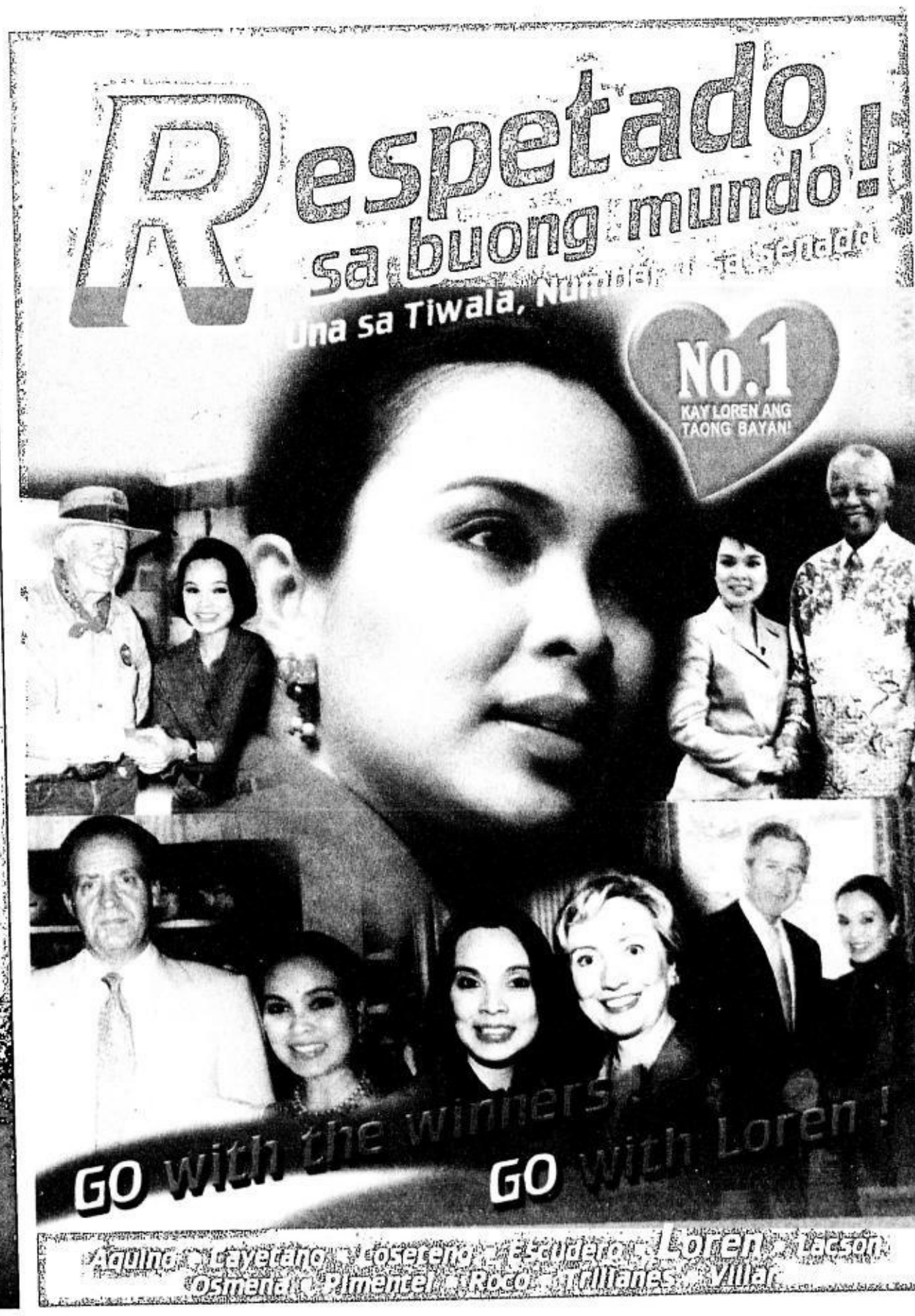
P - PULITIKONG MAY DILIKADESA.
U - ULIRANG MAMAMAYAN.
S - SUSOG SA BATAS ANG KANYANG GAGAWIN.
O - ORAS-ORAS HANDANG MAGLINGKOD.

K - KAYANG TANGGIHAN ANG TUKSO NG SUHOL.
A - ALAM ANG MGA PANANAGUTAN NG TUNGKULIN.

B - BABANTAYAN ANG KALIKASAN.
A - ALAM ANG MGA SULIRANIN NG BAYAN.

Katha ni Jesus L. Arranza
Pangulo, FPI

Para sa karagdagang kaalaman, makinig sa *"Dito Sa Bayan Ni Juan"*,
DZAR 1026 AM - Huwebes - 9:00AM - 10:00AM; Sabado - 7:30AM - 9:00AM.



FOR THE RECORD

Over the past 20 years, Senator Edgardo J. Angara's conscientious work in the Philippine Senate has benefited various sectors all over the country.

In his three terms as Senator of the Republic, since 1987, he has been a cut above the rest as an outstanding legislator.

Significant bills he authored have been passed into law and improved the lives of countless Filipinos, especially in the fields of Education, Health, Agriculture, Business and Finance, Culture, Environment, and Science and Technology.

Senior Citizens, Muslims and Cultural Communities also have reason to be grateful for Ed Angara's selfless brand of public service.

HEALTH REFORMS
initiated and developed by
Sen. Edgardo J. Angara

Generics Act (RA 6675)

Philippine Nursing Act of 1991 (RA 7164)

Magna Carta of Public Health Workers (RA 7305)

Rooming-In And Breastfeeding Act of 1992 (RA 7600)

Organ Donation Act (RA 7885)

Creation of the National Institute of Health (NIH) (RA 8503)

Institutionalization of a National Health Insurance Program for all Filipinos through PHILHEALTH (RA 9241)

Institutionalization of School Feeding Programs to address the problem of child malnutrition

Establishment of a Health Data Center to reinforce health data gathering

Declaring May 7 as Health Workers Day

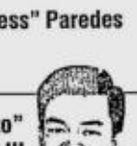
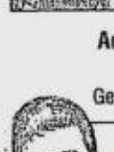
Amending the Breastfeeding Law

Expansion of PHILHEALTH coverage by establishing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to provide mandatory health insurance for infants and children of low-income families.

PINAKA-BATIKANG MAMBABATAS SI ED ANGARA!

Paid for by Friends of Angara

ISSUES: 'Hello Garci,' GMA

National candidates	'Hello Garci'	Legitimacy of GMA presidency
Edgardo Angara Team Unity	I believe we have to stop going back to issues that have already been settled. This has gone through the legal process and the House of Representatives has acted on it. We have to move on and focus on what is essential right now, which is how to achieve genuine progress for the country.	President Macapagal-Arroyo [GMA] is our president and will remain so until 2010. There are complaints on the legitimacy of her presidency—impeachment cases left and right—enough grievances that will last even after her term. We need to hear these complaints but we also need to push our country forward. Complaints and doubts need not paralyze us from passing laws, addressing more urgent issues and doing our duties as responsible citizens.
Benigno Simeon "Noynoy" Aquino III Genuine Opposition	Not a closed issue; no way that it can be investigated to its logical closure under this administration.	This is essentially the problem of this administration, which affects other problems like the irregularity in the elections, increasing militarization of government bureaucracy and attempts to change the Constitution.
Joker Arroyo Team Unity	It is basic in election law that allegations of cheating, when not enough to overturn the result of an election, do not invalidate the result. There might have been cheating, and it was wrong and stupid for the administration to do that, but it has been shown that the honest votes were more than the cheated votes and one could not nullify the result of the election because we cannot disenfranchise the honest votes.	The Supreme Court has ruled on this. The stability of our government is dependent on respect for the rule of law and so, whether we agree or not with the high court, the justices have spoken. At some point, we must rely on our established institutions. Gloria is president until 2010. In the 2010 elections, go full blast to oust her. Because the price they would pay for that three years of destabilization is something we cannot afford. We're already at the bottom of the heap in Southeast Asia. Let her be. And then watch out she doesn't do anything wrong.
Martin Bautista Kapatiran	As a senatorial candidate, I would like to respectfully ask Ms Arroyo if she contacted election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano [during the canvassing of votes] and if that contact resulted in Garcillano stealing even one vote. If she says she did not contact Garcillano, case closed. If she admits to having called Garcillano in 2004 and one vote was added to her tally, she must resign immediately and call for snap elections to coincide with the May 14 polls.	We cannot afford to have an illegitimate president who tampered with the one sacred duty we must all perform. Everything else follows: because through corruption (and ours is a lethal form of corruption which results in the death of our countrymen when they can't buy medications for diabetes and hypertension and they can't afford to buy nutritious food...) we diminish human life.
Alan Peter "Compañero" Cayetano Genuine Opposition	The "Hello Garci" issue is about the future and not the past. It is about electoral reform and preventing future cheating. Electoral fraud is the mother of corruption in the country. There is a need to complete the investigation and complete reforms in the electoral process and the party system.	Many believe that it was Fernando Poe Jr. who was elected president in 2004. During the congressional investigation of the "Hello Garci" scandal and the impeachment proceedings against GMA, I have seen convincing evidence that she cheated in the 2004 presidential election. An independent investigation should be allowed and the issue settled with finality.
Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng Genuine Opposition	It's still an issue. As long as the people's real sentiment (as expressed) in the ballot is not rightfully recognized, people will continue to be outraged.	The question of legitimacy is something that will never go away. People are just preoccupied. They just see they're helpless (to oust GMA). Illegitimate as she is, she will not abandon her post. The standard response of the administration is to ignore the accusations and protests, playing *deadma*.
Mike "Tol" Defensor Team Unity	This issue has been put to rest when Congress [House of Representatives] voted against the second impeachment complaint.	The "Hello Garci" issue was used to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the Arroyo presidency. When the House of Representatives, the only body vested by the Constitution with the power to rule on the sufficiency of the form and substance of an impeachment complaint, junked the second impeachment complaint, the matter has been put to rest.
Francis "Chiz" Escudero Genuine Opposition	It must be brought to its logical conclusion and those responsible should be brought before the bar of justice. This can be done by (1) Subjecting it [taped telephone conversations between Ms Arroyo and Garcillano] to a voice analysis by a mutually agreed upon authority; (2) requiring all parties to submit an affidavit on the matter so that the issues can be joined.	Under the prevailing legal system, yes. However, we are questioning the factual basis of such a legal proposition which, to my mind, has no legal leg to stand on given the evidence we have on her assumption of office in 2001 and on the 2004 presidential election.
Richard "Goma" Gomez Independent	We all saw it on TV, heard it on the radio and read it in the newspapers. The President has said sorry. Now, she must present proof that there was no cheating. Both sides should be heard.	Until now, it's a big question. She should answer all the allegations. She should show us that she is the legitimate president. But everything should be done in a peaceful manner—avoiding chaos and conflict.
Gregorio Honasan Independent	It is imperative to insulate the election process from any kind of partisan politics. We have to study the processes deeply, implement reforms if needed, and strengthen our institutions.	I have come to look at this as a non-issue. It no longer has a significant bearing on the current direction and progress of our nation.
Jamalul "Kiram" Kiram III Team Unity	Per Congress and Supreme Court, it's a dead issue. PGMA (Ms Arroyo) has won the 2004 elections, therefore she is the legitimate President.	She is the legitimate president.
Panfilo "Ping" Lacson Genuine Opposition	Despite Malacañang's insistence that the issue is a closed book, there has been no closure because it continues to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the administration. I campaigned for the political opponents of former election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano because he has come to symbolize all the irregularities that have tainted our electoral process, particularly the presidential election in 2004.	She may be the de facto president because she has the power of the Armed Forces behind her, but she cannot be deemed the legitimate president until she has fully cleared herself of any involvement in the cheating described in the "Hello Garci" tapes. She was not elected by the people in 2001 and in 2004. She has so far succeeded in stonewalling the impeachment and other constitutional processes questioning her legitimacy just to stay in power.
Loren Legarda Genuine Opposition	Everyone is aware of the efforts exerted by the opposition to get the controversy properly investigated in Congress. Unfortunately, congressmen identified with the administration refused to cooperate. That was disheartening because at the height of the controversy, Ms Arroyo pleaded for a chance to have her name cleared. Her impeachment would have provided her that chance but her allies in the House preferred to keep the truth away from the public. As a result, everyone was deprived of the opportunity to find out for themselves the real story.	I fought a principled fight to expose the electoral fraud of 2004 in my vice presidential electoral protest. It has been proven to a certain extent and for me that is a moral victory. The legitimacy issue will always hound the administration.
Vicente "Vic" Magsaysay Team Unity	I better not add to it because no one will benefit from this.	There is no issue regarding this. GMA is our President.
Cesar "Buboy" Montano Team Unity	From what I learned, mainly through the media, this controversy has been investigated by both the Senate and the House of Representative but no concrete findings have been arrived at that would point to any particular party guilty of wrongdoing. I must admit that I am rather surprised why this issue is being revived. Or are we saying that we do not trust the senators and the congressmen who conducted the investigation?	This issue has been directly and indirectly decided by several agencies and institutions such as the Comelec which counted the votes, the Senate which canvassed the results of the election, and the Supreme Court which ruled on the protest against the President. We should leave the issue behind and allow our people to move on. Anyway, the President has only three years left and it may be better for us to get help from her to get the country ahead.
Teresa "Tessie" Oreta Team Unity	What I think and what we all think about this should have been aided by the report of the minority on the investigation of the alleged Garci tapes. Where is the minority report? There is no minority report [in the House]. This puts us all in a difficult situation. Where do we base what we believe in? So, without that minority report and without a basis for a view on the issue, I would rather just buckle down to work.	At this time, we need to be more focused on how we can help the administration implement its socioeconomic programs. For me, there is no use debating the legitimacy of the GMA presidency. I am more interested in working with the President on the programs that will improve the conditions of women and children as well as the state of the education sector. Maybe, it's time that we move forward, move our country forward.
John Henry "Sonny" Osmeña Genuine Opposition	The "Hello Garci" tapes go [against] the completion of our electoral process. Let's change the manner of electing a president. One way is through an "electoral college" or weighted regional votes. We can also have staggered elections.	GMA is the de facto president and the unsettled legitimacy issue is a cloud on her presidency.
Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan Liberal Party	There's no closure in this controversy. Two impeachment proceedings failed to get to the bottom of it, thus a heavy cloud of doubt on the legitimacy of the administration. Whether we like it or not, until and unless the President is removed from office through constitutional processes, she remains president. In the meantime, the country needs to be governed. The challenge is to work toward providing viable leadership alternatives in 2007 and 2010 that will act as a principled check and balance on this administration.	The issue of President Arroyo's legitimacy has caused division in our country for too long. Definitely, there are questions to be answered but we need to reach these conclusions in a manner that does not transgress the Constitution and the rule of law.
Zosimo "Jess" Paredes Kapatiran	Damnable! Never again! This is taboo! Should evidence warrant, charge him with violation of election laws.	There should be closure. A swift and no-nonsense impeachment proceedings, if duly warranted, must definitely resolve, once and for all, the issue of legitimacy.
 **Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III** Genuine Opposition	The "Hello Garci" issue is still unresolved. What services did Garci render to President Macapagal-Arroyo during the 2004 elections? Why was he appointed by Ms Arroyo as Comelec commissioner just in time for the 2004 presidential election?	Ms Arroyo is the de facto president. Her "win" in the 2004 elections has not been proven to be legitimate. Garci should tell us what he did for her during the 2004 elections.
 **Ralph "Korecto" Recto** Team Unity	It should be "Goodbye Garci" by now. Let us put closure to this episode once and for all. Should this alleged wiretap echo through the ages or is it time to put it behind? What we should focus on are electoral reforms so the likes of Garci, if indeed it is he who was on the alleged tapes, are made obsolete. Democracy should not be burned down by a faulty electoral system.	It has been settled. Claims to the contrary should be addressed to the Supreme Court, which can't be accused of being partial to Malacañang, given the spanking it is getting from the high court. If one thinks the President is a pretender to the throne, then he should file a case. GMA has long exercised the functions of the presidency sans challenge. To say otherwise is to beat a dead horse.
Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. Team Unity	It's an empty accusation. The opposition has not shown any evidence. The tape was not authenticated. Besides, it's not the Comelec that canvasses the votes for the president and vice president. It's Congress in a joint session convening itself as the national canvassing board.	She was proclaimed by the national canvassing board so Ms Arroyo is the legitimate president of the republic. There was no protest. That the opposition did not file a protest against the President only shows she won the election legitimately.
Sonia "Inang Guro" Roco Genuine Opposition	Garci and all those involved should be made to face the consequences of their indiscretions. The rule of law should prevail and no one, not even Garci, should be above the law. Let us pray that the votes of the people in the first congressional district of Bukidnon [where Garcillano is running for congressman] will be honestly, credibly, peacefully counted with justifiable karmic effects. Hello, Hello Garci???	Before 2004, as the constitutional successor, she could be considered legit. However, when she backtracked on her word, and decided to run in 2004, campaigned like breaking all the rules was the right thing to do, only to discover in July that "Hello Garci" was the biggest rule that was broken. Many Filipinos, including myself, still yearn for the whole truth about the elections of May 2004. GMA's moral ascendancy is questionable. As she admits, she has had "lapses in judgment." The truth and rule of law, not rule of man or woman, should prevail.
Luis "Chavit" Singson Team Unity	This is an issue which has long been dead and buried. The administration weathered the storm and emerged stronger than ever. This is clearly evident in the resurgence of the economy and in the increasing approval rating of GMA. All other relevant indicators of political stability and economic progress show that even at the height of the "Hello Garci" issue, the opposition never gained the critical mass of popular support so how can it expect to revive a "dead horse?"	As I have said time and again, President Arroyo won the 2004 election fair and square. There is no argument against the fact that the she became the chief executive of the republic not as a result of a "power grab," that she was popularly elected, and, that she has not committed illegal acts as the sitting president. Hence, there is no question in my mind, and perhaps in the minds of the majority of our countrymen, about the legitimacy of the GMA presidency.
Adrian Sison Kapatiran	Charge him with violation of election laws.	There should be closure. This election is a referendum on her legitimacy
Vicente "Tito" Sotto III Team Unity	The tape was played out in full before the public and Congress. I don't think there is a need to rewind it. The better option is to bring out the minority report of the House of Representatives, which was completed but never brought out to the plenary. The "Garci" issue was acted upon in the House by the committees on information, communication and technology and suffrage. Garcillano even appeared and testified at the hearings.	The Supreme Court has ruled with finality on the legitimacy of the Arroyo presidency. Legally speaking, the death of FPJ has put to rest the existence of the proper party that contested this issue. Personal feelings and doubts, notwithstanding, we must respect and accept the Supreme Court decision. Our citizens and the government bureaucracy have already done so. Otherwise, anarchy will rule. We hold this legal maxim to be true: All cases must eventually come to an end once it has been decided upon in the proper forum.
Antonio "Magdalo" Trillanes IV Genuine Opposition	The only way to end the issue is to impeach GMA.	The only way to end the issue is to impeach GMA.
Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. Genuine Opposition	This will remain to be one of the unsettled mysteries in our country's political history.	The legitimacy of the GMA presidency is a matter of perception or opinion at this point, unless concrete evidence will prove the allegations of cheating during the last elections.
Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri Team Unity	The issue now is how she stepped up after this incident. Figures show our economy is slowly rising. This is because the President dwelled on issues relevant to our economic growth. If there is a clamor for the reopening and new evidence are made available, then I believe we should reopen the case.	She is the president and we should respect her position. She is the legitimate president and without doubt we should acknowledge that fact. Her case has been tried through a constitutional process and the results bear her out.

legitimacy, parliamentary gov't

How to reform the Comelec	'Turncoatism'	Shift to parliamentary form of government
Sadly, cheating in elections has become the norm in our society. Flying voters, bribing election return canvassers and cheating in the preparation of certificates of canvass are just some of the frontrunner's strategies. However, I believe that change is just around the corner. We don't plan to change things overnight. On automation, we need to decide what aspect can be initially automated. Reforms must be prioritized— what is most pressing and what is possible.	Leaders must come together not necessarily because they like each other but because they stand on common principles and fight for common values. A unity ticket where people of different opinions come together for the sake of national progress and unity is crucial to growth. Divisive politics has reduced our nation to poverty.	I'm pushing for three changes. First, greater autonomy to local governments. Second, the Supreme Court interfering in many economic decisions. Third, review of economic provisions of the Constitution. I'm not removing the restrictions. I'm for making flexible the exercise of that power so that we can respond immediately to the changes in investment, trade and commerce in the region. A constituent assembly (Con-ass) is the most realistic way to do it.
Exclude politicians as appointees to the Comelec; include a person who is an expert on communication and information technology in the commission; and prosecute all cases involving the election so that closure to these cases will be achieved.	Should be punished with forfeiture of public office; a politician should be disqualified from running if he or she changes party affiliation 18 months before an election.	No Charter change under the Arroyo administration.
Prudent appointments to the Comelec are the most serious reform needed. While automation may not exactly cure cheating, it's at least faster and will minimize cheating. If at all, we would want to know before we go to sleep on Election Day whether we won. Of course, with Filipino ingenuity our IT experts may attempt to go around the computer program but we have more well-meaning and country-loving IT people who will protect the integrity of the system.	No answer.	I'm against it. I don't think that's the solution. Our problem is not in the form of our government. It is in the people we elect. No amount of change in the system will remedy our sorry state as long as we keep electing incompetent and dishonest people to government. Any shift in the form of government should be viewed with suspicion for possibly being the handiwork of legislators who may only be out to [propel] themselves to power.
The Comelec will continue to brazenly disrespect the will of the people, *trapos* will continue to spend enormous amounts of money in order to continue a business arrangement that greatly profits numerous political dynasties.	*Trapos* will think nothing of switching parties indiscriminately.	If we hope to change, we need to start at the top. Now is not the time to switch to a parliamentary form because we need an enlightened electorate as well as responsible, platform-based political parties before we can even begin to change our form of government.
Reforming the Comelec also involves reforming the electoral system and the political party system. We need political will and resolve to go after election cheats, syndicates and operators.	Politics should be based on principles, programs and platforms of government. Turncoatism shows lack of principles and programs in our party system. Unfortunately, it is not a law which can reform this, but the people participating in party reform by establishing, taking control of, and financing truly principled political parties.	It's not the form of government that determines progress. The United States has a presidential system and is the richest and most powerful country, while Bangladesh is one of the poorest and has a parliamentary form of government. But there are also rich and successful countries with parliaments. What is common is the presence or lack of good governance. Poor countries are corrupt. Rich countries exercise good governance.
It should follow the law and be unshakeable in its independence and impartiality. We should push for lower election spending, allocating government funds for campaign expenses for legitimate political parties to level the playing field. The canvass of votes should go directly from the precincts to the national level, and not pass through the municipal and provincial levels where vote manipulation happens.	I practice one-party loyalty. I've been with NPC (Nationalist People's Coalition) from the start because I respect the person (founder Danding Cojuangco). That's why I joined his party. I have not left his party. I respect his leadership of the party. Unfortunately, we're not bound by party principles. Very few practice loyalty to the party that gave us the chance to be where we are. Usually, people join a party out of convenience.	No. We are not a mature democracy. If you go that way, you'll create people who can be more ferocious and power greedy because they will be running in a small area and chosen by a small group. Our bureaucracy is also not mature. Every time a new department head is appointed, the department staff is changed.
We must pursue reforms starting from voter registration. Let's ensure that there is integrity in the list of voters (no multiple registrations, etc.) and implement the full automation of the electoral process.	I'm not in favor of changing party affiliations with ease and for purposes of expediency. This practice does not develop the party system and political ideology in the country. Whatever internal differences there are in a party must be resolved within the organization, without members having to change party affiliation with great ease. Parties must evolve and must be enriched by such internal dynamics.	I do not have any preference as to the form of government. I'm of the opinion that whatever form of government, parliamentary, presidential, with a unicameral or bicameral legislative branch, etc., that will be adopted should subjected to full debate and careful study. As to the manner by which amendments may be introduced, a constitutional convention is more democratic and acceptable than a constituent assembly.
A complete revamp. Automation. And representation of both the opposition and administration in key areas and offices to remove any cloud of doubt with respect to its actions and decisions during elections	If ever this will be prohibited, sufficient time must be given to candidates to choose their party affiliation and not simply tie them down to their party at present—that will give undue advantage to the party in power. We have seen the ill effects of this during martial law and we should avoid it in order to reap, to the fullest, the advantages.	It should not be done at this time. It cannot and will not address the primordial problems our country and people are facing, namely: jobs, prices and income. Such a shift will only serve the interest of the few.
Number one priority should be the automation of elections. Cheating becomes easier with manual counting. I'm not saying that irregularities will be completely eliminated with full automation, but it will speed things up.	Politicians should stick to one party. "Turncoatism" causes corruption. In this country, everyone moves to the party of the person who wins the presidency. I believe in standing by one's party principles.	I am all for it, but it should be done properly. I am for Con-con—the delegates to be elected by the people. I'm not in favor of a Con-ass. Because Con-ass delegates come from the present Congress, it will be self-serving.
This involves institutional reforms.	Party turncoatism is indicative of our penchant for personality-oriented politics prevailing over platform-based politics.	My intention is to provoke a national and in-depth debate on what constitutional reforms have to be done, and their impact on the people. This would include further debate and studies on the form of government we are to adopt. The mode is a non-issue as long as it is insulated from partisan politics, upholds the spirit of democracy, and is implemented in such a way that would allow the people to come to informed and intelligent decisions.
After elections, work for the passage of an Electoral Modernization Act especially the computerization of systems.	Pass a law on and implement a program-based political party system, preferably under a presidential-unicameral system of government, then to a parliamentary-unicameral government, and ultimately to a parliamentary-federal form of government.	The stand of our party— PDSP (Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas)—is for a constitutional convention.
The Comelec's problems boil down to credibility, especially in the wake of the "Hello Garci" scandal, whose impact is still felt today. One can only hope that the personnel of the Comelec, from the chair and the commissioners to the rank-and-file, are people of integrity and fairness. The only way to pursue this is to make erring Comelec officials liable for every report of cheating in their respective jurisdictions.	When politicians change party allegiance at the drop of a hat, it shows a lack of commitment to party principles. Also, there have been instances when party leaders compromise principles for their own convenience, forcing their members to transfer to other groups. The party system must be strengthened and measures must be taken to foil instant turncoatism.	In our political culture, a shift to a parliamentary form allows the craftiest deal maker to end up a prime minister, conducting transactional governance anchored on selective distribution of pork barrel to ensure his or her continued stay in power, and isolating those who expose shenanigans in government. I'm in favor of federalism to give local governments more leeway to manage their resources, but again, only when our political system is mature.
To ensure that the exercise of the most sacrosanct right of free people—the right of suffrage—is upheld and safeguarded, this should not be left in the hands of the Comelec alone. Instead, it should be undertaken as a collective and unified effort of the citizenry. Be vigilant in the exercise of our right to vote and guard our votes.	It is incompatible with responsible political leadership. An elected official or a candidate for elective public office should not be allowed to switch parties to suit his or her private ends. The 1973 Constitution had a provision banning turncoatism during the term of an elective official. Perhaps it is time to revive the provision.	A shift to a parliamentary form is worth discussing but it requires a mature flock of political leaders for it to be truly representative of the aspirations of the people. At the moment, the parliamentary form of government will be vulnerable to abuse by politicians who use money and patronage. In the end, a prime minister may be installed because he or she is in the best position to dispense money and patronage and nothing else.
Change the Constitution because the Comelec is a constitutional body.	Campaign reforms identifying the sanctions for turncoatism should be legislated provided the parameters of the allowable reason to change parties are clarified. If the party is at fault on why a member changed his or her party, then this is not turncoatism.	There are several types of parliamentary democracies. Whether we adopt the Western European model, Westminster model or the other hybrids still remains to be debated. The representatives need to address this issue in their districts. Extensive education must be conducted so the people can decide wisely.
There are a lot of issues confronting the Comelec. An example was my problem with billboards. But I chose to comply so that there wouldn't be intrigues. I also believe that computerization will help us have clean and orderly elections.	It really depends on the person. It all boils down to one's intention. If he is changing parties, his priority should be the welfare of the people, not just because he wants to win the election.	I worry about the expense of the whole exercise. But if we can afford it I would welcome the chance to bring this to our people through a constituent assembly. Perhaps to be discussed after the elections.
To protect the rights of citizens to choose their leaders, the Comelec must, first and foremost centralize everything and promote better safeguards. We must also strive to computerize almost all aspects of the elections so fraud can be eliminated. Computerizing the voting system will also guarantee that overseas Filipino workers have a say on who will be the country's leaders.	Strong party systems indicate the strength of a democracy. For our country to gain a degree of political stability, we need to provide stability in our party system. We must institutionalize strong political parties in which members are accountable and responsible individuals. The parties must be treated as professional and coherent groups.	The parliamentary form entails a strong party system. But personality-based politics is still prevalent among Filipinos. While there are shortcomings in the current form of government, this administration is effectively addressing the country's needs by focusing on economic, fiscal and social reforms. I'm not for Charter change, but I'm open to amendments to some provisions.
Staggered elections, federal system, electoral college. Note the problems are in the "national elections"—president and senators.	Return to the two-party system. Turncoatism is the result of the multi-party system.	Against. Changes should not be [about those] who hold power in the center. Disperse power through a federal system.
We passed in the 13th Congress the Poll Automation Act, which I believe will serve to modernize and professionalize all sectors to promote reforms necessary for the people to trust again the electoral system and the Comelec. It would also promote basic reforms in voters' registration. One faces long queues, unclear guidelines and faulty manual systems when applying for a voter's registration card.	I'm running as an independent because of my conviction that politicians must say what they mean and mean what they say. Turncoatism undermines the public's trust in government and its officials. Rules must be set to allow someone to validly leave a party. The transfer must be approved by an authority like the Comelec. A penalty must also be imposed such as forfeiture of public office.	It's not the form but the manner of governance that will address what ails our nation. The best argument against a unicameral parliamentary form is our latest sorry experience with Cha-cha [Charter change] through the Con-ass undertaken by the House of Representatives. Will a new form of government end corruption, provide quality education and job opportunities to our people? Stop illegal logging? End political killings? Obviously the answer is no.
Comelec officials from the chair to all the commissioners must not be appointed by the President. By 2010, elections, henceforth, must be computerized! Campaign expenditures must be limited to the barest minimum, and the national government or the Comelec must shoulder all necessary expenses for tri-media information on elections, the candidates, and the parties' corresponding platforms of government.	Return first to the two-party system, then make turncoatism a condemnable and punishable offense.	No to parliament! Yes to presidential, bicameral and federal government! Given the psyché of the Filipino politician, a parliamentary government would only hasten our country turning into a banana republic.
Change commissioners (including the chair of course) and top-level officials. Hire idealistic young people. Bombard Comelec personnel with extensive courses on the importance of democracy to our society and way of life, onthe values of honesty, and objectivity, as well as on the election laws and their objectives. Improve the pay of all Comelec personnel but at the same time make it easier for the new officials to fire erring personnel.	Party turncoatism must be prohibited by law and should be penalized (by disqualification from running under the name of the new party).	I have an open mind on shift to a parliamentary form of government. But still I don't want to entertain any Charter change under Ms Arroyo because of the "extraneous matters" that she and her minions keep on inserting as proposed changes to the Constitution.
Automate. If we trust an ATM with our money, why can't we trust a machine to count our votes? Appoint opposition nominees to the Comelec. Post the voters' list on the Internet to flush out ghosts. Regularly shuffle poll officials so they won't fraternize with elected officials.	Many are forced to shift to big political parties during elections so they will be entitled to a copy of the election results. Our election laws are not small party-friendly. What we should guard against is principle turncoatism. The "coat" can change for as long as the core beliefs stay.	I'm for Charter change because the Constitution is not etched in stone. Large swaths of the basic law, economic provisions, for example, are ripe for revision. But I'm against a single chamber legislature and a head of government not directly elected by the people. A bicameral legislature is not redundant lawmaking. On the contrary, two-chamber synergy results in better oversight, checks and better laws.
It is a perception that the Comelec cheats. Since it's a perception, I cannot give you a perceptive (answer on how to reform the Comelec).	My stand is consistent with my behavior (I have not changed parties since entering politics).	Con-con. There is no definite time because Con-con can take one year, two years or three years.
Aksyon Demokratiko believes that "people are our wealth. They are more important than institutions." To strengthen the Comelec, let's start by replacing its people and leadership. Choose independent-minded and principled chair and members. Computerize elections which is long overdue. Take teachers out of the political arena. (*Yung sistem na hindi kailangan ng* commission *para ma*-elect.)	There are no reference points, from where to where, other than the Liberal and the Nacionalista parties. One of the best ways to start political reforms is to strengthen political parties. Party turncoatism negates this effort. Judas was the first party turncoat in history. (*Ang balimbing bukod sa pampa-asim ng* party *ay di lang doble cara*, multi-*sipsip*, multi-personality, multi-*lahat* in shape, color, smell, speech, actions.)	No need to shift to parliamentary. Why? In past elections, Filipinos voted directly for their president and other leaders. What we need is not Charter change but character change as clearly put by the statement of the CBCP. Good and honest governance is the result of good and moral character coming from responsible leaders not from shifting to different systems of government. (In the words of then Vice President Erap: he does not want to be called Vice Parliament.)
Computerization is the key.	Strengthening political parties is crucial to reforming the electoral process that currently imposes a heavy financial burden on candidates. Turncoatism is incompatible with my objective of helping develop strong political parties composed of card-bearing members. Political butterflies underscore the fact that parties in the country are indistinguishable from one another. It also shows that Philippine politics remains personality-based.	A shift in the form of government is not necessary. The review of the Local Government Code is more important. We should explore ways and means to amend the Code in order to give LGUs more political and economic autonomy. Besides speeding up the release of the IRA to local government units and provinces, funds due them should be increased.
Make the poll body's work more transparent, and put a deadline for the computerization of the election process	Party turncoatism must be penalized	I like the parliamentary form of government but do not amend the Constitution now.
The badly needed solution to our electoral problems is the computerization of our voting system. Computerization, including the use of the Internet in our absentee voting system, will also guarantee that overseas Filipino workers, the main contributors to our economy, will have a greater participation in determining who will be our country's leaders.	The fact that our Constitution has provided for a multi-party system, which is really more suited to a parliamentary form of government, has created a practical need for political parties to form alliances and coalitions. Party lines are blurred and in reality, there is no more "turncoatism" in the old sense of the word. We need to strengthen our political party system to make our democracy more stable.	I'm not in favor of a shift to a parliamentary form because this is a return to the old European form of government. This is the same system that the United States revolted against when it adopted direct government representation of the people through a system composed of the executive, legislative and judiciary. The fear that combining the powers of the executive and the legislative branches will present a greater temptation for government abuse is a real concern.
Strengthen democratic institutions.	Strengthen the two-party system so we can really ban turncoatism. As of now, the party system does not exist.	The presidential system is still the best for the country.
As its President, the Senate was able to steer the passage of the Automated Election System Act of 2006, which seeks to improve the capability of the Comelec to help ensure free, orderly, honest, and credible elections using automated systems. In addition, there is a measure asking the Comelec to submit a comprehensive report to the President and to Congress after every election containing the minimum basic and complete electoral data as a matter of record.	Political candidates should have the freedom to choose their political allies and alliances.	As long as the shift is done without shortcuts, according to the correct and proper procedure provided for by the Constitution, the pertinent laws enacted by Congress, and that the majority of the people clamor for such change.
There's a need to enforce the automation of elections as mandated by R.A. 9369. We should also review the appointing procedures and the expansion of the membership of the Commission to make it more representative of concerned sector.	A person should fight for what he or she believes in. We are entitled to our own opinions. This is what democracy is all about. If a person changes his or her views about certain issues, then let us respect that. We are only human after all. We can change our minds about certain issues.	Change the Constitution so it can address the country's political and social needs. Our Constitution is a living document that provides for its own amendment. While changing the Constitution will benefit Filipinos, we should not forget that our central task is to intensify the fight against poverty. I am for democracy. Amend the Constitution in such a way that all the regions in the country will be well-represented.

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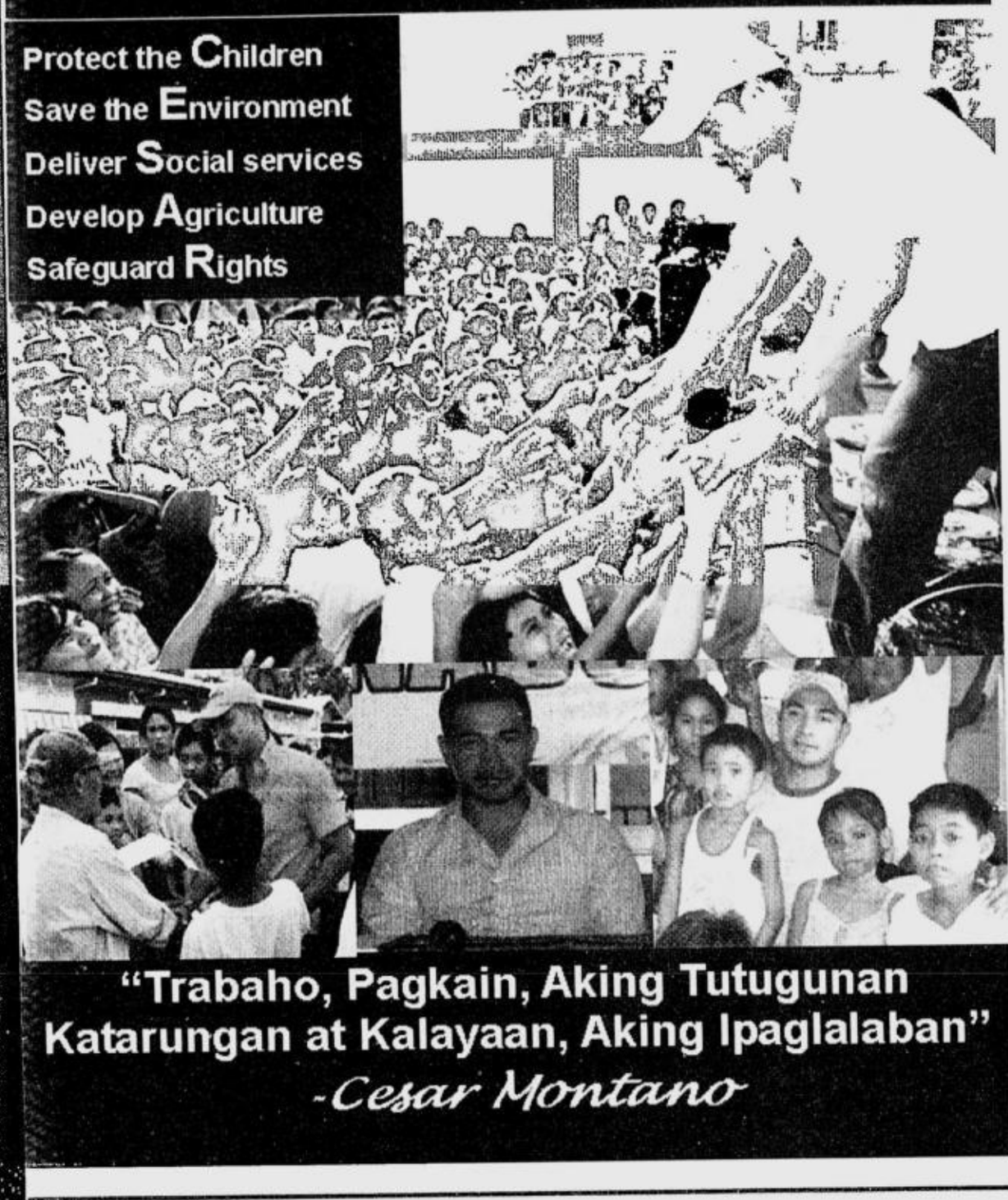
Develop Agriculture
Safeguard Rights



"Trabaho, Pagkain, Aking Tutugunan
Katarungan at Kalayaan, Aking Ipaglalaban"
-Cesar Montano

VOTERS' GUIDE
ELEKSYON 2007

FAST FACTS

More than
45.5 million
number of registered voters
(as of March 30)

17,889
elective posts up for grabs in the synchronized national and local elections on May 14

Positions at stake

Half the seats of the Senate

All the seats in the House of Representatives —for district representatives and party-list representatives

All the seats for officials of all cities, provinces and municipalities

To be elected are:

		Member, House of Representatives
12 Senator	220 (District)	55 (Party-list)
81 Governor	81 Vice-Governor	770 Member, Sangguniang Panlalawigan
118 City Mayor	118 City Vice-Mayor	1,322 Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod
1,510 Municipal Mayor	1,510 Municipal Vice-Mayor	
12,092 Member, Sangguniang Bayan		

Who can vote?

As stated in the 1987 Constitution the following have the right to vote:

- Citizen of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law;
- At least eighteen years of age; and
- Those who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year and in the place where they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election.
- No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage.
- Filipinos abroad with dual citizenship can vote and register as absentee voters. They may vote for the position of president, vice-president, senators, and party-list representatives.

Candidates' qualifications

SENATOR

- A natural-born citizen of the Philippines;
- At least 35 years of age on the day of the election;
- Able to read and write;
- A registered voter, and a resident of the Philippines for not less than two years immediately preceding the day of the election.

REPRESENTATIVE

- A natural-born citizen of the Philippines
- At least 25 years of age on the day of the election
- Able to read and write
- A registered voter in the district in which he or she shall be elected, and resident for not less than one year immediately preceding the day of the election. This residency requirement does not apply to nominees for party-list representatives.

LOCAL ELECTIVE POSTS

- A citizen of the Philippines
- A registered voter in the barangay, municipality, city, or province or, in the case of a member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Sangguniang Panlungsod, or Sanggunian Bayan, the district where he intends to be elected;
- A resident there for at least one year immediately preceding the day of the election
- Able to read and write Filipino or any other local language or dialect.

- Candidates for governor, vice governor or member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, or mayor, vice mayor or member of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of highly urbanized cities must be at least 23 years of age on Election Day.
- Candidates for mayor or vice mayor of independent component cities or municipalities must be at least 21 years old.
- Candidates for the position of member of the Sangguniang Panlungsod or Sangguniang Bayan must be at least 18 years old.

Disqualification

The following are disqualified from running for any elective local position:

- Those sentenced by final judgment for an offense involving moral turpitude or for an offense punishable by one year or more of imprisonment, within two years after serving sentence;
- Those removed from office as a result of an administrative case;
- Those convicted by final judgment for violating the oath of allegiance to the republic;
- Those with dual citizenship;
- Fugitives from justice in criminal or nonpolitical cases here or abroad;
- Permanent residents in a foreign country or those who have acquired the right to reside abroad and continue to avail themselves of the same right after the effectivity of the Local Government Code of 1991; and
- The insane or feeble-minded.

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Mahusay na Programang Pangedukasyon at Pangkalusugan,
Pagsasaayos sa mga Daan at Inprastraktura,
Produktibong Pangkabuhayan at
Naninindigan para sa Kapakanan ng Mamamayan
Tungo sa Maunlad na Kinabukasan
Man of the Masses

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Absentee voting

Philippine elections saw a first in 2004, when qualified Filipino citizens abroad were able to vote for president, vice president, senators and party-list representatives, by virtue of Republic Act No. 9189 or the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003.

However, only some four percent or 300,000 of the 7.5 million Filipinos abroad enlisted during the two-month registration period.

The absentee-voting option is also available for members of the Armed Forces, police and other government agencies, who have been assigned temporarily to places where they are not registered voters to perform election duties. However, they are allowed to vote only for president, vice president, senators and party-list representatives.

New districts

Each of the following has one additional legislative district:
1. Marikina City
2. Taguig-Pateros
3. Zamboanga City
4. Zamboanga Sibugay
5. Sultan Kudarat
6. Cagayan de Oro

New provinces:

1. Dinagat Islands
2. Shariff Kabunsuan

Party-list system

Starting 1998, Filipino voters have elected into Congress representatives of national, regional and sectoral parties under the party-list system.

The system, established by Republic Act No. 7941 (the Party-List System Act of 1995), enables Filipinos belonging to marginalized sectors to take part in legislation.

Party-list representatives should constitute 20 percent of the total number of members of the House of Representatives. The number of seats given to each winning party depends on the number of votes cast for it. Each party is entitled to not more than three seats.

With 212 legislative districts, there were 42 available slots for party-list groups in 2004. But due to the requirement that party-list groups garner at least two percent of the total votes cast to gain a House seat, only 24 seats representing 16 party-list groups were filled.

This year, with 220 district seats, 55 seats are set aside for ty-list representatives.

Forms of cheating

- Vote padding and shaving commonly called *dagdag-bawas*
- Bribery
- Intimidation
- Illegal use of indelible ink
- Assuming the identity of another voter and voting in his or her name
- Snatching of ballot boxes and election paraphernalia
- Marking ballots so these would be considered "spoiled"
- Spreading false reports about withdrawal or disqualifications of candidates
- De-listing voters identified with a rival party
- Changing location of precincts
- Falsifying certificates of canvass

Compiled by PDI Research